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LEGENDS of the BATTLEFIELD

THE FASCINATING STORIES OF HISTORY'S GREATEST MILITARY LEADERS



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From the very beginning of time, the world has been marked and defined by conflict and bloodshed. In Legends of the Battlefield we profile some of the greatest figures in military history, from the fearless warriors of the ancient world and medieval conquerors to the early-modern revolutionaries and the 20th century's most renowned generals. Filled with fascinating insight, in-depth features, battle maps and illustrations, you'll discover how Alexander the Great built one of the world's mightiest empires and learn about Gustavus Adolphus's military innovations. We also discover what happened when two of America's most respected generals went head-to-head in the Civil War, meet the Russian who helped crush the Nazis and bring World War II to an end, and much more. We'll bring their stories to life, explore some of their key conflicts and glorious victories and examine the impacts they made on the battlefield and in military history as a whole.



「 FUTURE 」

LEGENDS *of the* BATTLEFIELD

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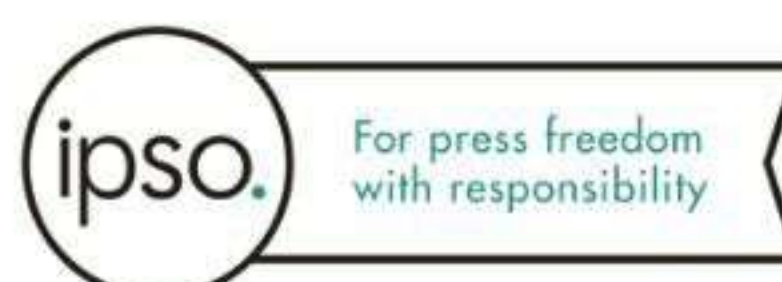
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of
WAR**
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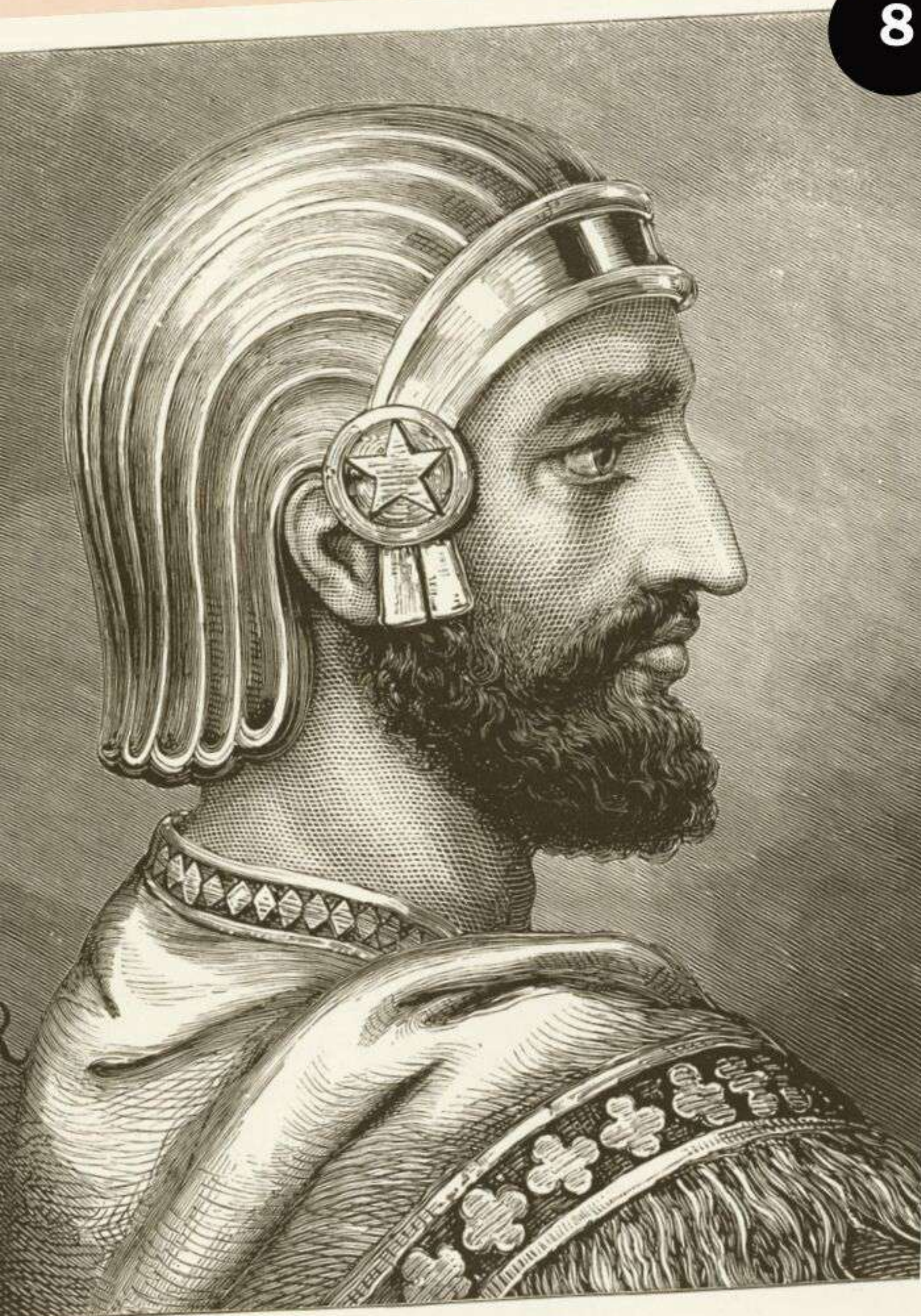
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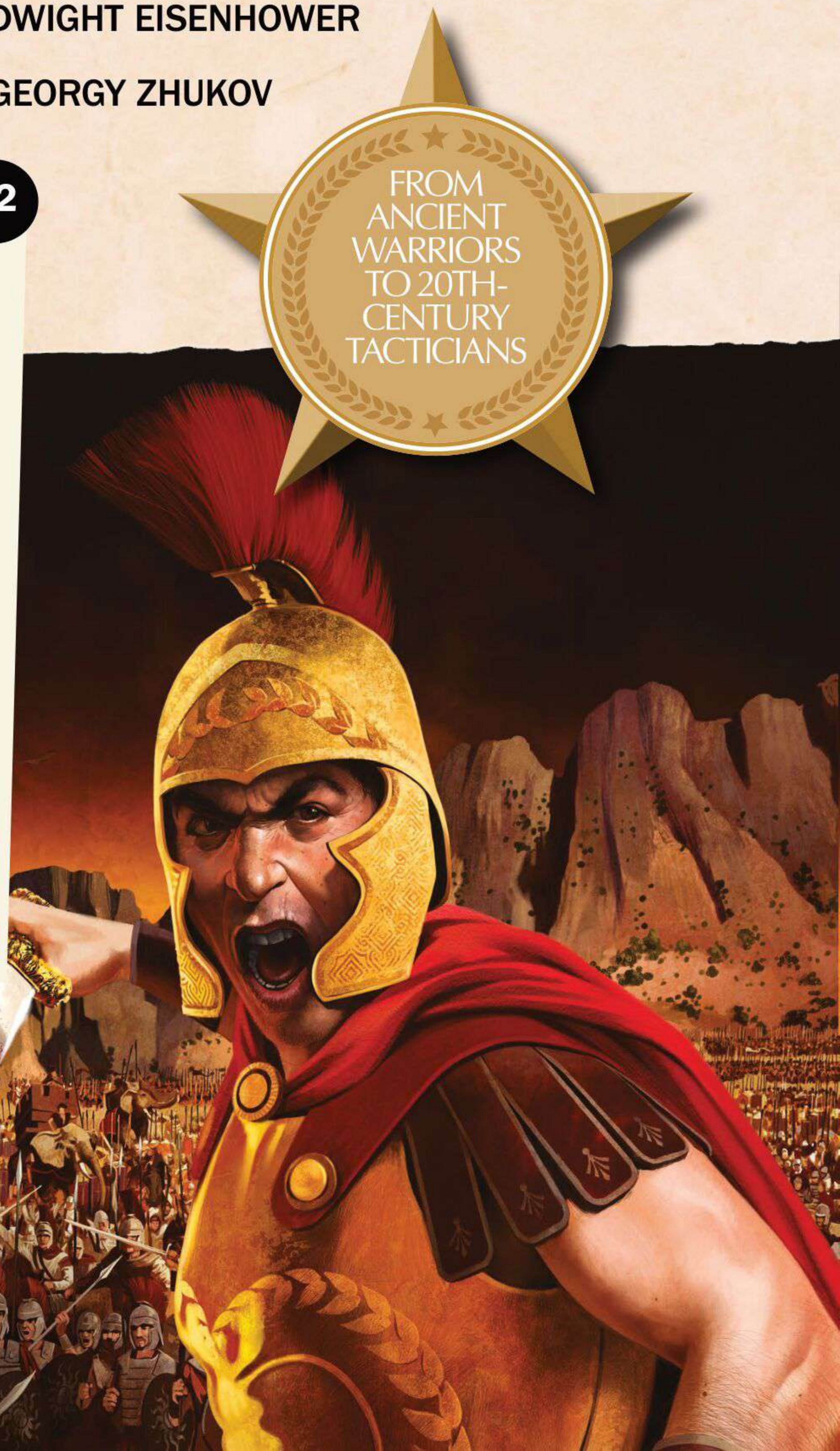


CYRUS, KING OF PERSIA.

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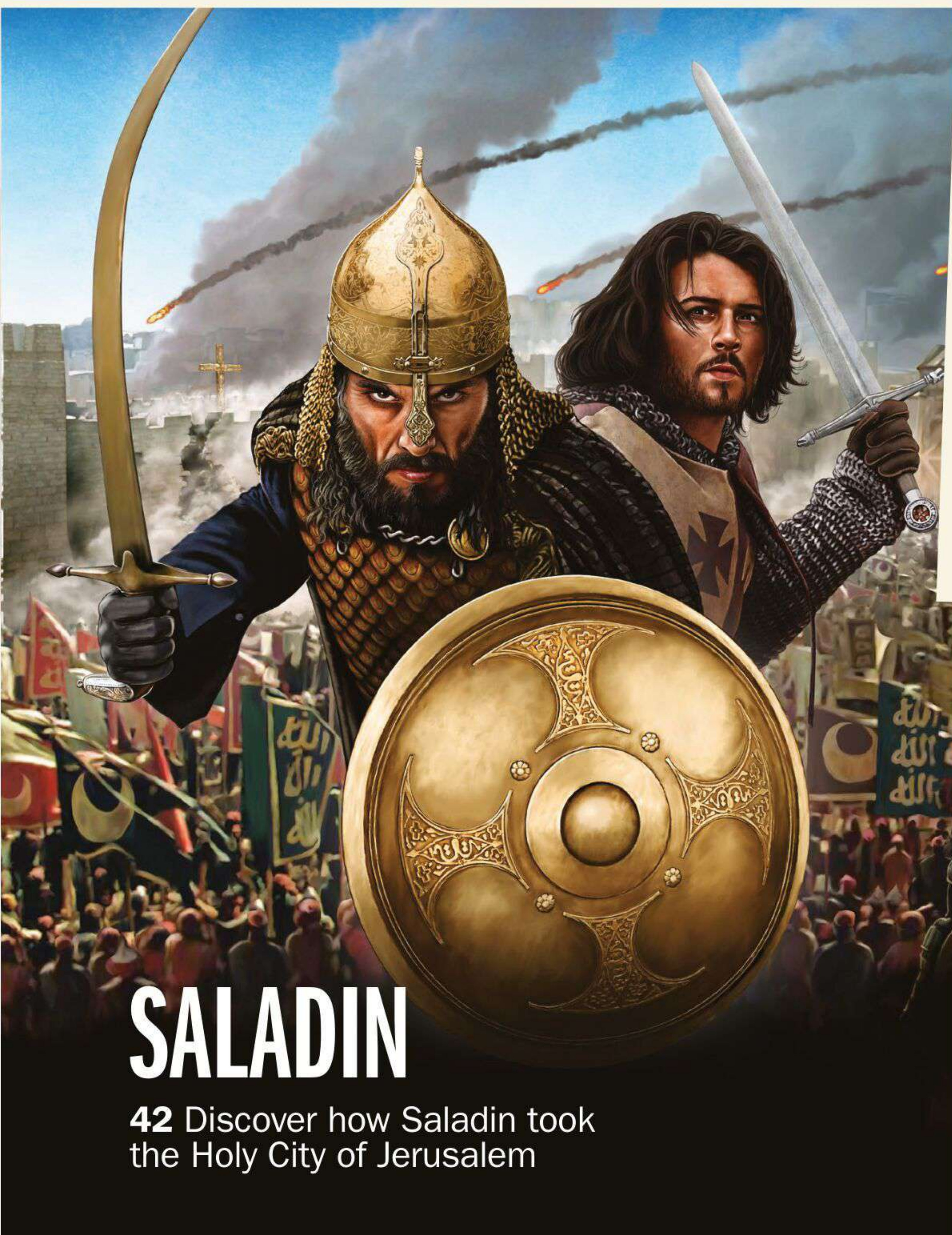
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CYRUS THE GREAT

Cyrus was much more than a ruthless conqueror who founded the Persian Empire – he was a brilliant and original administrator whose government actually worked



Cyrus the Great was the founder of one of the most impressive regimes of the ancient world, the Persian Empire, which lasted for two centuries (550-330 BCE) until it was destroyed by Alexander the Great. Despite its significance, undisputed facts about Cyrus's conquests are thin on the ground. Scholars tease what they can from legend, from scattered cuneiform tablets, from brief, one-sided accounts in the Biblical Old Testament, and from Cyrus's own statement justifying his conquests.

Before Cyrus's time, Turkey and the rest of the Middle East was divided between three empires: Lydia in western Turkey; Media, which spread across to today's Central Asia; and Babylonia, spanning Iraq, Iran and the Mediterranean coast. The ancient Assyrian empire had recently been divided between the Medes and the Babylonians. Away to the east and north, in the unknown heart of Asia, were the Scythians (also known as Saka), nomadic horsemen who lived in a shadowy world beyond the horizons of civilisation.

Cyrus's homeland, Persia, had been founded by his ancestor Achaemenes when his tribe emerged

from inner Asia two centuries earlier. Cyrus, the seventh king of the Achaemenid Dynasty, was born either in about 600 or 575 BCE – a 25-year difference that points to the unreliability of the available sources. When Cyrus was a child, Persia was an unremarkable dependency of the closely related Medes.

Herodotus, Greece's great historian and traveller, writing 100 years later, told of Cyrus's rise. His grandfather, Astyages, king of the Medes, dreamt of a vine growing out of his genitals. Priests told him its meaning – that a descendant would overthrow him. His daughter, Mandane, was pregnant. So the king told a noble to kill the child. The noble delegated the task to a humble shepherd, who disobeyed, and raised the child as his own. The truth came out when the boy play-acted being a king so convincingly that he came to Astyages' attention. Astyages recognised his grandson, who was, of course, Cyrus.

The boy spent his childhood with Astyages, being trained and educated. According to the Greek historian and diarist Xenophon, he was a boy of rare intelligence and charm: "[He] was something too much of a talker, in part, may be,



A statue of Cyrus the Great in Germany



King Astyages sending Harpagus to kill the young Cyrus



Queen Tomyris receiving the head of Cyrus, king of Persia

THE CYRUS CYLINDER

It's been called the first ever human rights charter, but what did it promise?

The Cyrus Cylinder, only ten inches long, is a major source for the king's achievements, though an unreliable one. For one thing, it is damaged, and the text is incomplete. For another, it is in effect propaganda justifying Cyrus's conquests and rule. The Babylonian king, Nabonidus, is denigrated and Cyrus is praised as the protector of Babylonian interests. The cuneiform text, here selected from the British Museum translation, reads in part:

"Rites inappropriate to [the cult-cities] were daily gabbled, and as an insult, he (Nabonidus) brought the daily offerings to a halt. In his mind, reverential fear of Marduk, king of the gods, came to an end. He did more evil to his city every day, and to his people. Enlil-of-the-gods became extremely angry at their complaints. The gods left their shrines,

angry that he had made them enter into Babylon. Enlil-of-the-gods inspected and checked all the countries, seeking for the upright king of his choice. He took the hand of Cyrus, and called him by name, proclaiming him aloud for the kingship over all of everything. Marduk, the great lord, who nurtures his people, saw with pleasure his fine deeds and true heart, and ordered that he should go to Babylon. He had him enter without fighting or battle. He handed over to him Nabonidus, the king who did not fear him. All the people, nobles and governors bowed down before him and kissed his feet, rejoicing over his kingship, and their faces shone. I am Cyrus, king of the universe, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world."



“CYRUS HAD RULED FOR SOME 30 YEARS, AND CREATED AN EMPIRE MORE THAN 2,500 KILOMETRES ACROSS, THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD TO DATE”



The tomb of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae in modern-day Iran

because of his bringing-up. He had been trained by his master, whenever he sat in judgment, to give a reason for what he did, and to look for the like reason from others. And moreover, his curiosity and thirst for knowledge were such that he must needs inquire from every one he met the explanation of this, that, and the other... talkativeness had become, as it were, his second nature. But... the impression left on the listener was not of arrogance, but of simplicity and warmheartedness... However, as he grew in stature and the years led him to the time when childhood passes into youth he became more chary of his words... but his company was still most fascinating, and little wonder: for whenever it came to a trial of skill between himself and his comrades he would never challenge his mates to those feats in which he himself excelled: he would start precisely one where he felt his own inferiority... and then, when he was worsted, he would be the first to laugh at his own discomfiture.”

Eventually, as a young man, Cyrus returned to his father's court in Persia, where he acceded to the throne in about 559 BCE. Herodotus picked up the story. To prevent his dream coming true, Astyages invaded Persia. But Cyrus defeated him, and in about 550 BCE, took Media. In revenge, Astyages summoned the son of the disobedient noble and had him chopped, roasted and boiled, and then tricked the noble into eating the boy.

Next in line was Lydia, which fell a few years later. No details are recorded, though Herodotus has a story to fill the gap. The Lydian king was

Croesus, of legendary wealth. Croesus consulted the great oracle at Delphi and was told that if he attacked the Persians he would destroy “a great empire.” He attacked, and Cyrus, strengthened by Median troops, drove Croesus back inside his capital, Sardis. Persian troops then scaled a supposedly unscaleable wall, and the city fell. The great empire that Croesus destroyed was his own.

In 540 BCE, Cyrus turned on his next target, Babylon. Famous as the capital of a great empire for more than 1,000 years, Babylon had fallen on hard times until its fortunes revived under Nebuchadnezzar in the early 500s BCE, during which he sacked Jerusalem (587-586 BCE) and captured numerous Jews, an event vividly recorded in the Bible. By Cyrus's time, though, Babylon had become a soft target because its king, Nabonidus, had been absent for ten years (553 BCE–543 BCE), leaving the city in the hands of his son, Belshazzar. His unexplained absence – perhaps trying to extend trade routes in Arabia – seems to have made him unpopular. Or perhaps he was unpopular because on his return he had all the images of Babylonian gods brought from their sanctuaries into the capital for safekeeping. Whatever the reason, it gave Cyrus an unexpected chance to present himself as the protector of Babylonian religion.

In autumn 539 BCE – one of the few firm dates in the history of the time – Cyrus invaded Babylonia, won a battle at Opis, to the north of the capital, and then entered Babylon, seemingly without further resistance. According to Herodotus, the Persians did this by diverting

the Euphrates, lowering the water-level until they could march across the river-bed. Nabonidus was captured, and vanished from history, his fate unknown.

Cyrus recorded his conquest in the clay document known as the Cyrus Cylinder, a blatant piece of PR designed to justify his conquests. It claims that Nabonidus had been unstable and impious, and that the great god Enlil had chosen Cyrus as his instrument to bring peace by restoring the shrines, allowing refugees to return and rebuilding the capital. The cylinder declares: “I returned the images of the gods, who had resided there, to their places and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned to them their dwellings.” As a result, “all nobles and governors bowed down before him (Cyrus) and kissed his feet, and their faces shone.”

His generosity did not apply only to the local religions. The Jews, too, were allowed to return from their captivity to Israel. Possibly (as the Bible says), Cyrus actually funded the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. In fact, the rebuilding occurred under Cyrus's grandson, Darius, but Cyrus's role became accepted as a fact. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus claimed to quote a letter from Cyrus: “I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before,” (though Josephus was writing 500 years later, and presents no evidence for this).

In any event, the Jews developed huge admiration for Cyrus. The prophet Isaiah called Cyrus God's ‘anointed’ – in effect the Messiah – and prophesied God-given victories over all nations. Another prophet, Ezra, has Cyrus saying that God “hath given me all the kingdoms of the Earth.”

After Babylon, where now? To the north and east lay another world to conquer, the land of the nomadic horsemen, the Scythians. Having appointed governors and officials to rule the different provinces and peoples of his empire, Cyrus probably died fighting the Scythians in 530 BCE. Again, we have no firm records, just stories, the best of which is told by Herodotus.

One of the Scythian tribes was called Massagetae, known for drinking fermented mares' milk and for the outlandish equality of the sexes. Armoured in helmets and war belts, they fought

on horseback with battle axes and bows, men and women alike. At the time, they were ruled by a queen named Tomyris.

Nomadic horse-archers were almost impossible to defeat, because they vanished like mist across the steppe. So (in Herodotus’s tale) Cyrus resorted to trickery. He set out a banquet with much wine, which was unfamiliar to the milk-drinking nomads. The Persians withdrew, the nomads advanced, found the banquet, ate, drank and fell into a stupor. The Persians returned, killed most of them and took Tomyris’s son prisoner. When he awoke, he committed suicide. Tomyris swore to get her revenge: “Leave my land now... or I will give you more blood than you can drink.” In the next battle, the nomads destroyed the Persians and killed Cyrus. Tomyris found the king’s corpse, filled a skin container with blood, cut off his head and thrust it into the blood with these words: “Although I am alive and gained victory over you in battle, you have destroyed me because you took my son by trickery. Now I shall do just as I threatened, and give you your fill of blood.”

It is a vivid tale, but its truth for Herodotus was probably less in the details than the moral: great leaders should not resort to trickery.

Cyrus had ruled for some 30 years, and created an empire more than 2,500 kilometres across, the largest in the world to date, reaching from the Black Sea to present-day Afghanistan. His son, Cambyses and another descendant, Darius, extended the empire into Egypt, the Libyan and India. It was not to last. In the 330s BCE, Alexander the Great defeated the Persians, and the Achaemenids came to an ignominious end.


However, Cyrus’s creation sent echoes down the corridors of time. Scholars agree that his success as an imperial ruler owed much to his form of government, balancing central administration with local freedom. His system was retained by subsequent dynasties, and served for more than 1,000 years until the Arab conquest of Persia in the seventh century.

The Cyrus Cylinder even proclaims such a modern-sounding commitment to religious freedom and justice that, in the 1970s, the Shah of Iran called it “the first human rights charter in history.” More likely, according to others, it resembles modernity in a different form, as a puffed-up piece of propaganda. But Iran still sees it as a foundation stone of national identity.

The memory of Cyrus lives on at his supposed burial site near Shiraz, in southern Iran. The tomb, standing on a rock plinth, is close to the ruins of Pasargadae, Cyrus’s capital until his son Cambyses changed it to Susa. There is no hard evidence that it is his tomb, but if it is – and the same as the one honoured two centuries after his burial by Alexander – it bore a long-gone inscription, which ran in one version: “Passer-by, I am Cyrus, who gave the Persians an empire, and was king of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument.”

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

The scope of the Persian Empire was so large that it soon became known as the Universal Empire. Its frontiers were in a constant state of flux as the political and administrative efficiency of the different imperial dynasties changed. Despite this, the Persian influence spread from the Mediterranean to India and its features are recorded in most cultures.

 Pottery was one of the first artistic expressions of the ancient empire. Later on, goldsmithing and silversmithing became more important.

RELIGION
Persian people were tolerant of other regions’ religions. Their official religion was Mazdaism. With the Muslim conquest, Islam became the official and state religion.

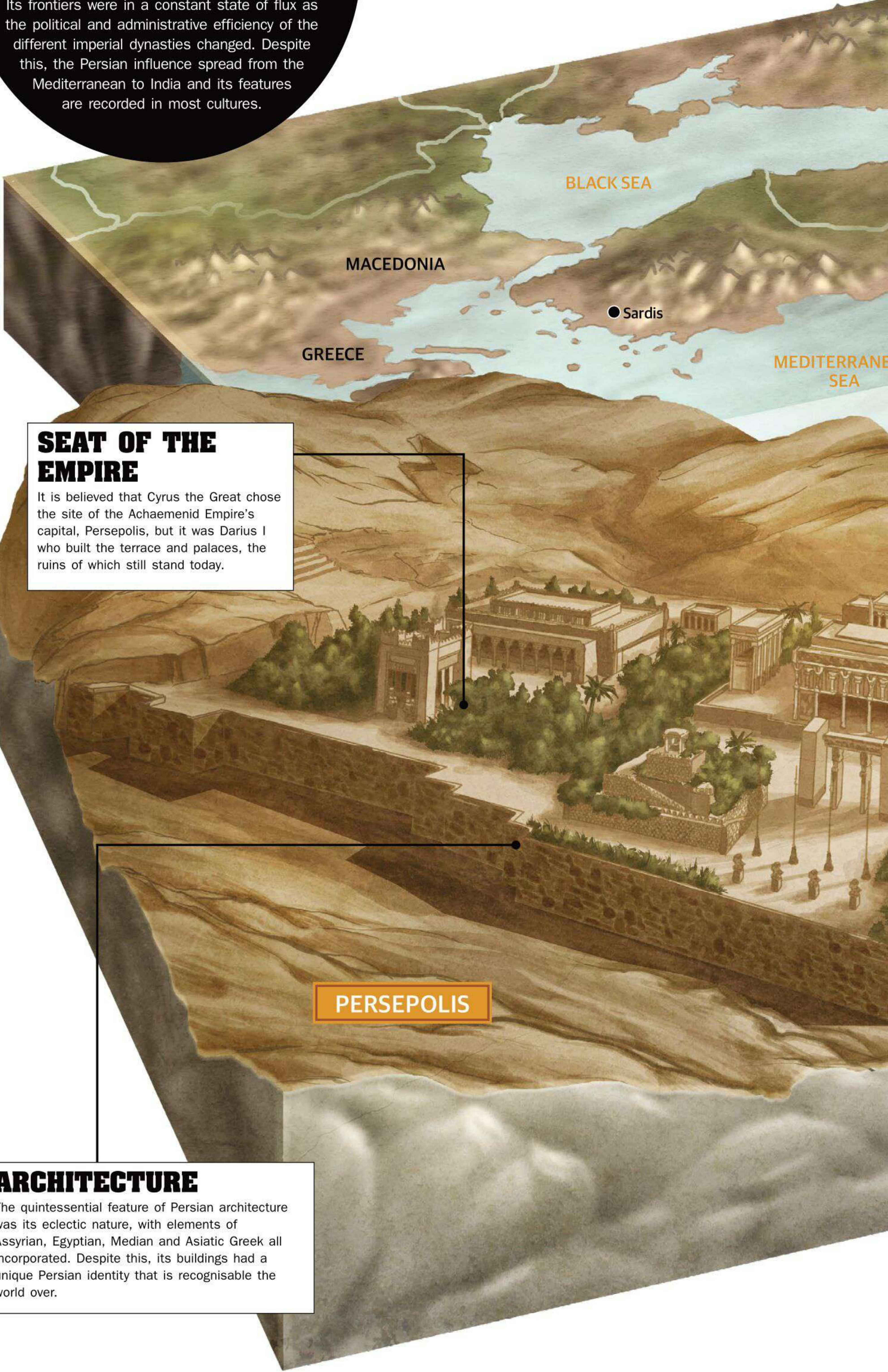
SEAT OF THE EMPIRE

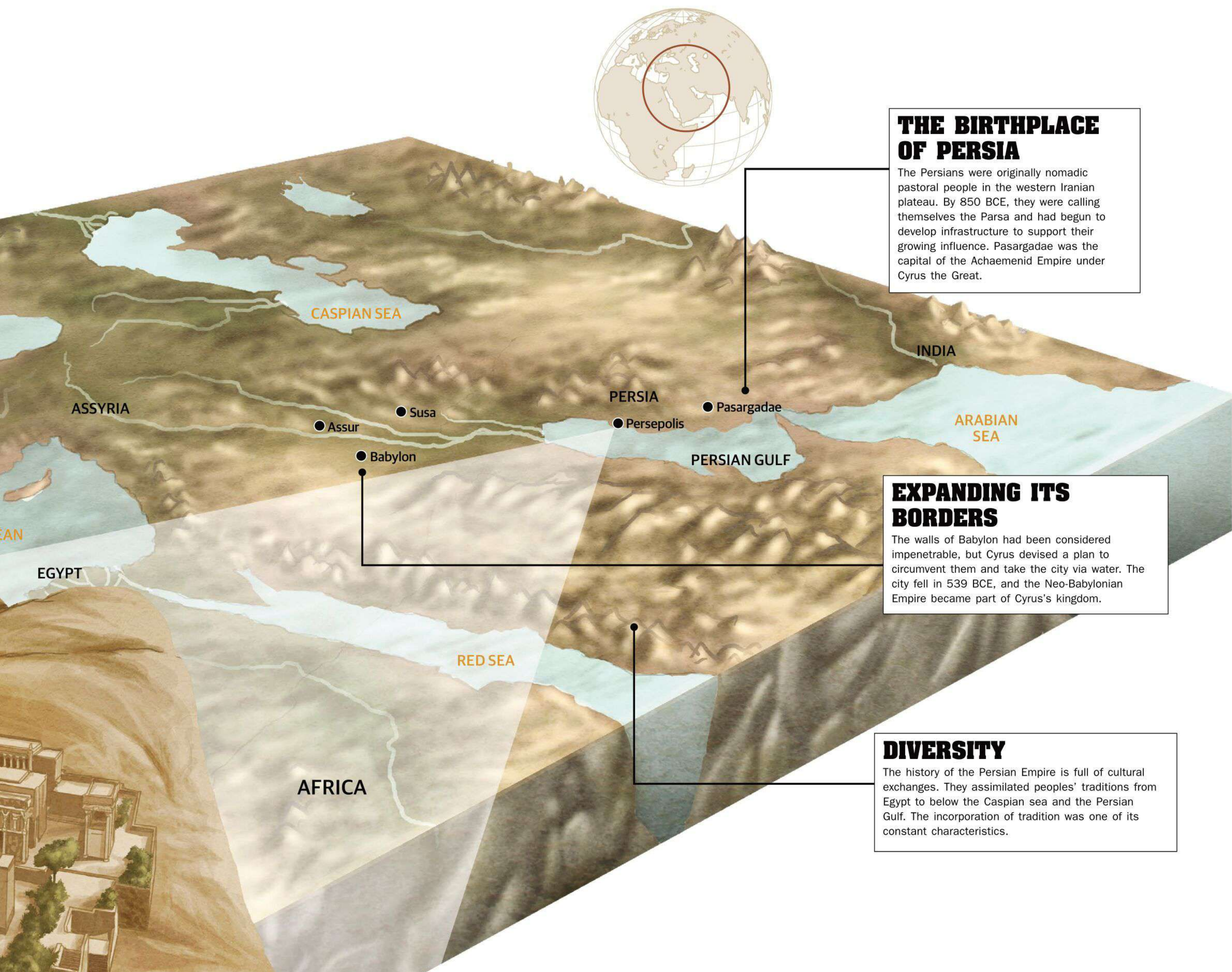
It is believed that Cyrus the Great chose the site of the Achaemenid Empire’s capital, Persepolis, but it was Darius I who built the terrace and palaces, the ruins of which still stand today.

PERSEPOLIS

ARCHITECTURE

The quintessential feature of Persian architecture was its eclectic nature, with elements of Assyrian, Egyptian, Median and Asiatic Greek all incorporated. Despite this, its buildings had a unique Persian identity that is recognisable the world over.





THE BIRTHPLACE OF PERSIA

The Persians were originally nomadic pastoral people in the western Iranian plateau. By 850 BCE, they were calling themselves the Parsa and had begun to develop infrastructure to support their growing influence. Pasargadae was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great.

EXPANDING ITS BORDERS

The walls of Babylon had been considered impenetrable, but Cyrus devised a plan to circumvent them and take the city via water. The city fell in 539 BCE, and the Neo-Babylonian Empire became part of Cyrus's kingdom.

DIVERSITY

The history of the Persian Empire is full of cultural exchanges. They assimilated peoples' traditions from Egypt to below the Caspian sea and the Persian Gulf. The incorporation of tradition was one of its constant characteristics.



THE PERSIAN IMMORTALS

Of all the terrors that the Persian army brought, the most feared were the 'Immortals', an elite bunch of fighters who were nicknamed thus due to their apparent inability to die in combat. When one of its 10,000 infantry fell, they were immediately replaced, maintaining the corps as a cohesive entity with a constant strength.

The Immortals were armed with a short spear that was tipped with silver or gold counterbalances to differentiate their rank. The shortness of the spear gave mobility at the cost of reach. They also carried a short bow and arrow quiver. This granted them a flexibility to alter their combat range quickly, switching deftly from hand-to-hand to ranged combat in the blink of an eye.

The Immortals played an important role in Cambyses II's conquest of Egypt in 525 BCE and Darius I's invasion of India's smaller western frontier kingdoms (western Punjab and Sindh, now in Pakistan) and Scythia in 520 BCE and 513 BCE. Immortals participated in the Battle of Thermopylae of 480 BCE against the Spartans and were among the Persian occupation troops in Greece in 479 BCE under Mardonius.



ALEXANDER THE GREAT

At the head of the world's most feared fighting force, Alexander the Great took for himself a vast empire through the sword, and has been called a hero, tyrant and a god



The king died quickly, his white robes soaked red. The laughter and rejoicing of a royal marriage – the wedding of his daughter – had quickly turned to screams and wails of lament as Pausanias, a member of the king's personal guard, turned on his master, driving a dagger between his ribs. Tripping on a vine as he fled the scene for his getaway horse, the assassin was brutally stabbed to death by the furious spears of pursuing guards. Philip II died as he had lived: awash with blood and surrounded by intrigue. His legacy would leave bloody footprints across the whole of Central Asia and the Middle East.

Over a 23-year reign from 359 to 336 BCE, the king of Macedon – a mountainous land overlapping modern northern Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia – had gone from ruler of a barbarous backwater of tribal highlanders to the overlord of the fractious Greek kingdoms and city-states. Bringing his rival monarchs in line through war, military alliance and marriage, Philip II had reformed the Macedonian army into one of the most feared fighting forces in the ancient world, with a view to bloodying their most hated foes, the Achaemenid Empire of Persia, which had humbled and humiliated the Greeks in the Greco-Persian Wars a

century earlier. Aged just 20, Alexander III of Macedon – soon to be remembered as Alexander the Great – took the throne as the head of a military machine on the brink of war and legendary status, and gleefully drove it full throttle over the edge.

Alexander had been groomed for greatness from birth, but he was no pampered prince. Tutored by the austere Leonidas, who forbade all luxury, the general Lysimachus and the philosopher Aristotle, Alexander was proficient with weapons, horse riding and playing the lyre, and an expert in ethics, philosophy and the skills of debate. He trained daily in pankration, an ancient Greek martial art, which focused on savage grapples, punches, kicks and choke holds. A Renaissance man before the Renaissance, he was schooled in the skills to conquer and the knowledge to rule. At 16 he had governed Macedon as regent while his father warred far from home, the young heir putting down rebellious tribes in Thrace and founding a whole new city, Alexandropolis – the first of many that would bear his name.

Like so many civilisations before and after them, the ancient Greeks loved to gossip. Philip's death, they said, was an act of revenge from his scorned lover Pausanias, but two other people immediately benefited: Olympias,

mother of Alexander and once-favoured wife of Philip, had been in danger of losing her status to a younger bride; and Alexander himself, who promptly executed all other contenders for the crown and crushed rebellions across Greece. Olympias, too, set about consolidating her power, having Cleopatra Eurydice, her replacement as consort to the dead king, and her baby daughter burned alive.

The dubious heroes of myth were Alexander's own blueprint for greatness. With legendary figures on both sides of the family tree, it was hard not to be convinced of his own special destiny. His father's bloodline claimed descent from Hercules – the son of Zeus and bull-wrestling demigod of Twelve Labours fame – while his mother's family looked up to Achilles, the all-but-invulnerable champion of the fabled Siege of Troy. Omens and portents prefigured every decision, but as much as this ambitious new king gave every appearance of being a slave to destiny – looking for meaning in flights of birds and consulting oracles at every turn – he steered destiny himself, consciously building a legend that would lift his accomplishments well beyond those of his father and into the same world of the legendary journeys and heroic battles that had once inspired him. In just shy of a decade, he



A picture showing Alexander the Great suppressing a rebellion in Greece

crushed the life out of the once-mighty Persian state and expanded the borders of his domain from Libya to India to create a mighty empire.

Fittingly, this conquest began with some mythical brand management. Picking up where Philip II's army of invasion had been poised, Alexander crossed the Dardanelles – the narrow channel connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, and Europe from Asia Minor – in early 334 BCE with 47,000 soldiers and mercenaries from across Macedon and the Greek kingdoms. Leaping from his warship in full ceremonial armour, vast plumed helmet and golden breastplate, the emperor-to-be sent a spear whistling through the air to crash into the undefended soil of Asia Minor. It was the first blow in a war that would claim for Alexander over 200,000 square miles of land and leave between 75,000 and 200,000 dead.

The coastline of what is now Turkey was littered with Greek cities ruled by the Persian invaders, and of them Troy had particular significance for Alexander. The alleged site of his maternal ancestor Achilles' most celebrated victory and tragic death, Alexander carried with him on his journey the story of the Trojan War, Homer's epic Iliad (a gift from his tutor Aristotle), and quoted from it often. First, he had the tomb of Achilles opened so he could pay tribute, then riding to a nearby temple of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, the Macedon king was shown what they claimed were the weapons of Achilles. There, he

took down a shield, replacing it with his own. Alexander wasn't merely content sharing a fanciful familial association with Achilles; he wanted to rival him, visiting this site of bloodshed and heroism, and taking the mantle of one of ancient Greece's greatest heroes.

Was it a propaganda stunt that spurred on his army, or did he believe it? His fierce pragmatism and ambition would suggest both – a dangerous and unpredictable combination that made him one of the battlefield's most iconic generals.

First meeting the Persians in battle in 334 BCE, Alexander quickly established a formula for swift and decisive victory at the Battle of the Granicus, just outside of his beloved Troy. Leading from the front ranks, a feint drew the stronger Persian units and their battle-hardened Greek mercenaries out, spreading their line thin and allowing Alexander's cavalry to hammer through their scattered ranks. He was welcomed as a liberator by the Greek subjects of Asia Minor, and endeavoured to win over the local population too. Claiming to distrust tyrants, he appointed local rulers and allowed them relative independence, but with a new centralised tax system he ensured their autonomy was reliant upon his handouts.

With Persia's control of the vast expanse of Asia Minor resting on its superior navy, Alexander opted to scatter his own vessels rather than fight a sea war he couldn't win, and marched down the coast to take the

enemy's largest naval port, Halicarnassus by land, forcing his way through the walls until the Persians had to abandon their own city. After passing through Cappadocia with scarcely any resistance in 333 BCE, Darius III, the Persian Shahanshah – king of kings – could stomach this embarrassment no longer, and with an army that outnumbered the Greeks by two to one, confronted Alexander at the Battle of Issus. Were the king to fail here then Darius' army would be able to link up with his powerful navy and Alexander's whole campaign, resting as it did on his thin line of victories down the coast, would be wiped out and all dreams of Greek civilisation free from the menaces of its aggressive Eastern neighbour would spill out into the dust like so much wasted Macedonian blood. At Issus, like many battles before and after, Alexander rode up and down his ranks of assembled men to deliver an address worthy of heroes, playing on old glories and grudges.

"He excited the Illyrians and Thracians by describing the enemy's wealth and treasures, and the Greeks by putting them in mind of their wars of old, and their deadly hatred towards the Persians," wrote the historian Justin in the 3rd century CE. "He reminded the Macedonians at one time of their conquests in Europe, and at another of their desire to subdue Asia, boasting that no troops in the world had been found a match for them, and assuring them that this battle would put an end to their labours and crown their glory."

BATTLE OF THE GRANICUS (334 BCE)

Alexander's first victory against the Persian Empire

The first real clash between Persian troops and Alexander's newly minted invasion force remains the best example of his signature battle tactic.

Using heavy cavalry to prise apart the weakest part of the enemy line while his finely drilled infantry kept the bulk of the enemy tangled up on their spears, it relied upon the professionalism of Macedon's army, as well as the unique talents of its core units.

It showed that Alexander knew how best to use the forces that his father had amassed.

02 FEINT

Alexander's Thessalian cavalry and pikemen feint from the left. The Persians reinforce the line from the centre to drive them back.

04 CAVALRY CHARGE

Alexander's cavalry charge sweeps left and into the flanks of the Persians, who are locked in battle with his phalanx and cavalry.

05 PERSIAN RETREAT

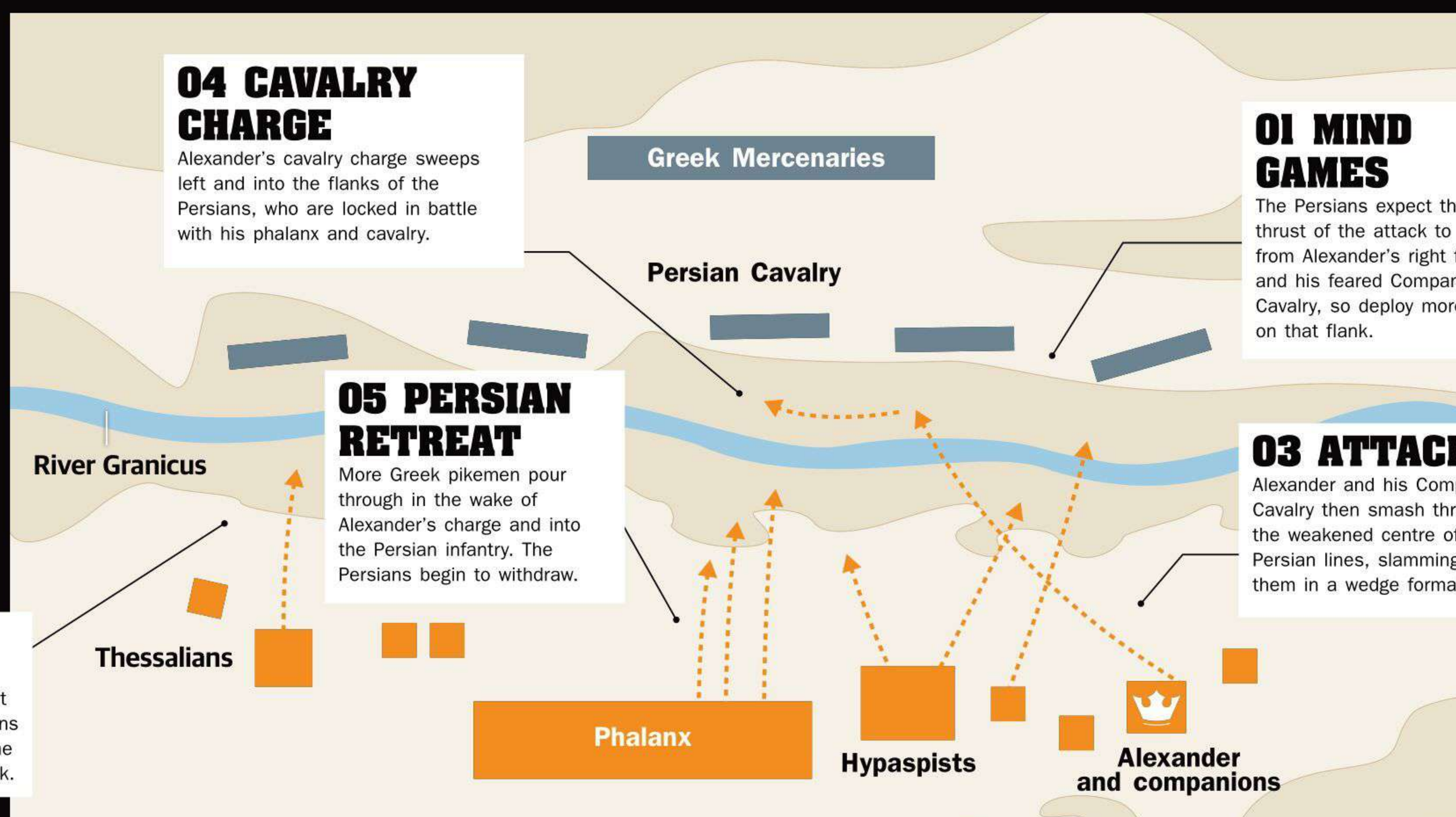
More Greek pikemen pour through in the wake of Alexander's charge and into the Persian infantry. The Persians begin to withdraw.

01 MIND GAMES

The Persians expect the thrust of the attack to come from Alexander's right flank and his feared Companion Cavalry, so deploy more units on that flank.

03 ATTACK

Alexander and his Companion Cavalry then smash through the weakened centre of the Persian lines, slamming into them in a wedge formation.



With shock etched upon his face, Darius fled the battlefield as the Greek charge cut through his ranks like a scythe, with Alexander at its head, crashing straight through the Persian flanks and then into their rearguard. With their king gone they began a chaotic and humiliating retreat. With only one Persian port left – Tyre, in what is now Lebanon – and the hill fort of Gaza in modern Palestine both falling in 332 BCE, the thinly stretched Achaemenid defences west of Babylon quickly crumbled or withdrew before the relentless march of Alexander.

Unexpectedly, he then turned his attention not east toward the enemy's exposed heart, but west in the direction of Egypt and Libya. They, like the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, would welcome him as a saviour. With no standing army and whole swathes of the country in the hands of Egyptian rebels, the Persian governor handed over control of the province outright. The last set of invaders had disrespected their gods, so perhaps the Egyptians were keen to take advantage of Alexander's vanity and safeguard their faith by placing this new warlord right at the heart of it. Maybe, too, Alexander had seen how illusionary Persian authority was in Egypt, and wanted to try a different tack. He may have been one of the world's greatest generals, but he knew the sword was not the only path to acquiring new territory.

Riding out to the famous Oracle of Amun – the Egyptian answer to Zeus – at the Siwa oasis, Alexander was welcomed into the inner

sanctum of this ancient temple, an honour usually afforded only to the ordained priests of Amun, while his entourage was forced to wait in the courtyard. The exact details of Alexander's exchange with the Oracle remain a mystery, but the end result was unambiguous. Alexander was now more than merely a hero of legend. Even the myth of Achilles reborn could scarcely contain his ambition, and he declared himself the son of Zeus. His worship spread across Egypt, where he was raised to the rank of Pharaoh. This didn't sit well with

Alexander's countrymen, but here at least, the king didn't push it.

"[Alexander] bore himself haughtily towards the barbarians," recalled the army's official historian Plutarch, "and like one fully persuaded of his divine birth and parentage, but with the Greeks it was within limits and somewhat rarely that he assumed his own divinity." Despite his 'haughtiness', Alexander had been raised on tales of the Egyptian gods from his mother, and Greeks – the philosopher Plato among them – had long journeyed to this



The Battle of the River Granicus, in which Alexander secured his first victory over the Persian Empire

ancient land to study in what they regarded as the birthplace of civilisation. Standing amid the great pyramids and temples, the 25-year-old Alexander either saw around him an ancient power to be held in great respect or feats of long-dead god-kings that he had to better.

The result was the city of Alexandria, planned in detail by the king, from wide boulevards and great temples to defences and plumbing. Construction began in 331 BCE, and it remains the second-largest city and largest seaport in Egypt, linking the king’s new world to his old one, both by trade across the Mediterranean and by culture. In making Alexandria the crossroads between two great civilisations, a great centre of learning where Greek and Egyptian religion, medicine, art, mathematics and philosophy could be bound together was created, and the city came to symbolise the better aspects of Alexander’s nature, his desire for education and learning and his patronage. Darker days, though, lay ahead.

Like an angel of death, Alexander turned from his ‘liberation’ of the Achaemenid Empire’s downtrodden subjects and drove east with a vengeance. Now in the belly of the beast, Alexander’s less heroic qualities were beginning to show themselves with greater regularity – an arrogance, cruelty and obsessive drive that had he failed in his conquest, would have been remembered as the madness of a tyrant rather than the drive of a king.

Breaking out of a pincer movement to defeat Darius again at the Battle of Gaugamela in 331 BCE, Alexander seized Babylonia. Provincial rulers loyal to the humiliated king of kings promptly surrendered. With his authority crumbling, Darius was stabbed by one of his generals, Bessus, and left by the roadside, where pursuing Greek scouts found him in 330 BCE. Overcome with pity – and perhaps respect for this foe they had chased across mountains and deserts – they offered the dying king of kings water from a nearby spring. In declaring himself Shahanshah, Bessus’s throne was a fiction, and only a handful of frontier provinces remained in the usurper’s blood-slick hands. The once glorious Persian Empire, for 220 years the largest in the ancient world, had died by the roadside, humiliated and betrayed.

Taking the capital Persepolis after a last-ditch attempt to hold back the Greeks at a narrow pass called the Persian Gates, the power-drunk Alexander burnt the great palace to the ground in, it is believed, retaliation for the Persian sack of Athens in 480 BCE. Casting the first torch into the building himself, looting and burning spread across the city. Priests were murdered and Persian women forced to marry his soldiers. Zoroastrian prophecy had foretold “demons with dishevelled hair, of the race of

wrath” and now, Persia’s holy men realised, the demons were here.

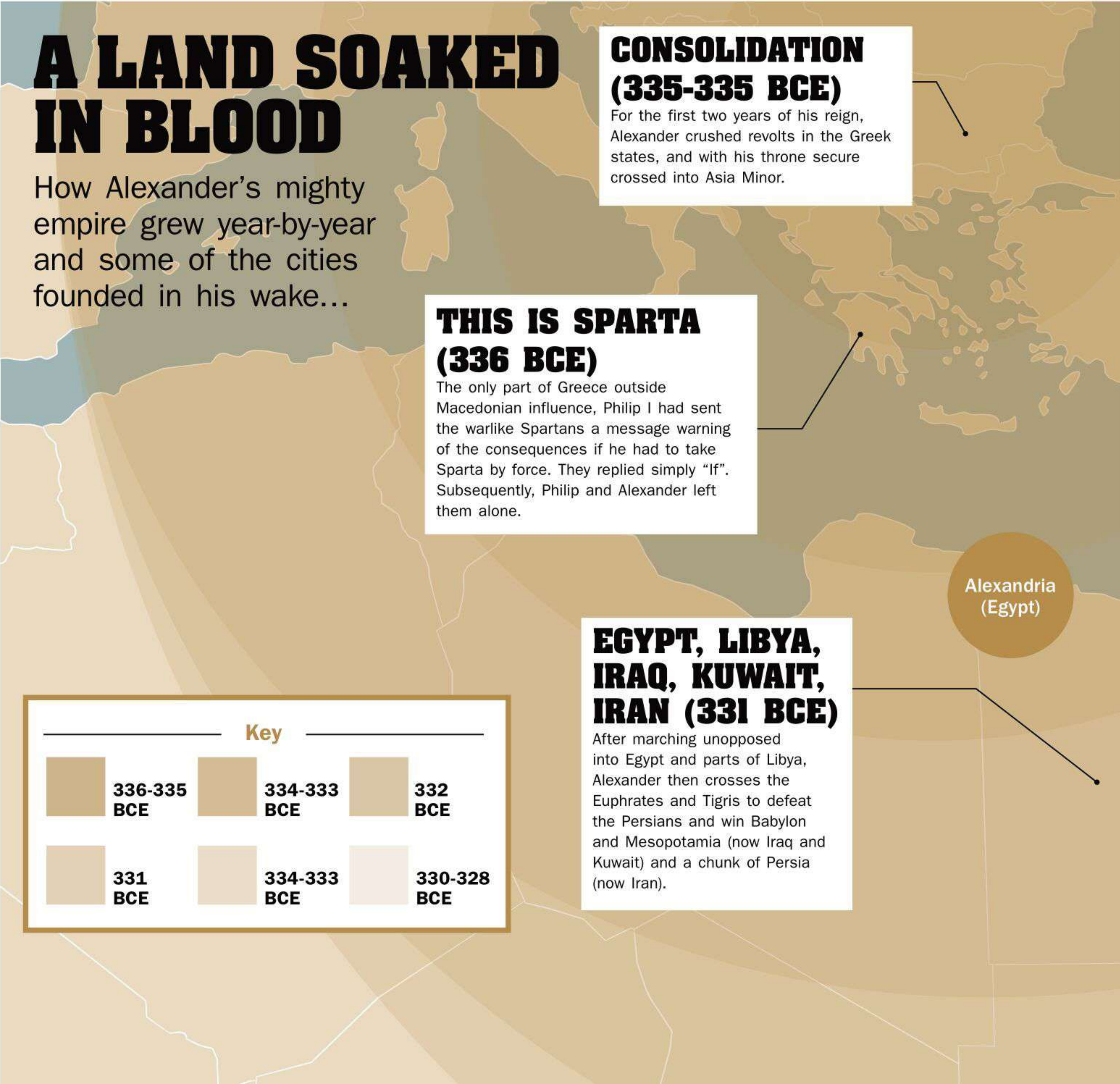
As his predecessor Darius had been, Bessus was chased down by the ferocious and dogmatic Alexander into what is now Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Across deserts with little supplies, Alexander rode along his lines, picking up men who fell and lifting their spirits. A charismatic leader even against the backdrop of the bloodiest of campaigns, he had the power to inspire his weary soldiers. Eventually, Bessus’ support collapsed. With no army worth a damn, he had been forced to burn crops and stores before the Greek advance in a last-ditch attempt to slow Alexander’s terrible pursuit. Fittingly for the betrayer of the last Shahanshah, his own men handed him over to the Greeks. His nose and ears were cut off at Alexander’s command, and he was sent back to Persia in chains to be impaled, the Persian punishment for traitors.

This rampage across Persia and her furthest fringes wasn’t the first time Alexander’s determination had taken on a more murderous hue. In 334 BCE, he had marched his men into the sea up to their chins rather than turn back along the beach, only surviving because the tide began to change direction with the wind, and in 332 BCE this sheer bloody-mindedness joined forces with his ruthlessness at Tyre – the first of many appalling massacres.

Refusing to surrender and believing their island fortress was impregnable from land, Alexander laid siege, blockaded the port from the Persian navy and over seven months built a causeway from the mainland to the city – an incredible feat of engineering that allowed his catapults to come within range of the city. Tyre was soon breached, and Alexander’s fury fell upon the city’s population. Of the 40,000 inhabitants of Tyre, 2,000 were crucified on the beach, 4,000 were killed in the fighting, a handful were pardoned, and over 30,000 sold into slavery.

This act of impossible engineering and bloody vengeance was later repeated in northern India at the Battle of Aornos in 327 BCE, where the crossing of a mountain ravine by improvised wooden bridge – built over seven days and seven nights – was followed by the massacre of the tribal A vakas. Welcoming Alexander with open arms, the Greek-speaking Branchidae were set upon when it became known their ancestors had collaborated with the Achaemenids, while other defenders were murdered because they surrendered too late, or been promised safe passage to lure them from behind their walls and into the spears of the Macedonian phalanx.

Like arterial spray on armour, growing accounts of sackings, burnings, enslavement and murder pepper the record of Alexander



in gore. It seemed like the further he got from home, the darker his deeds became.

While the rewards of conquest – plunder, wives, riches and glory – had been great, the Greeks were beginning to tire not just of this endless war that had taken them further and further from home, but Alexander’s increasing pretensions. This monarch from Greece’s barbarian hinterland had begun to dress in Persian robes, train Persians for the army and insist on courtiers throwing themselves to the ground in the manner of subjects before the Persian king of kings – an affront to the dignity of the Greeks, who took pride in never bowing to their monarchs. On top of that, he now wished to be worshipped as a god.

After one drunken celebration in 328 BCE, this discontent found voice when Cleitus the Black, an old Macedonian general who had served under Philip II and saved Alexander’s life in battle, decided he’d had his fill. The general bristled, turned to Alexander, and told him that he would be nothing without the accomplishments of Philip, and all that he now possessed was earned by the blood and sacrifice of Macedonians. Alexander threw an apple at the general’s head, called for his guards and then for a dagger or spear, but wary of escalation, those present quickly began bustling Cleitus from the room and tried to calm their monarch. Either Cleitus wasn’t fully



A picture depicting Alexander founding Alexandria, which would become the ancient world’s most prosperous city

removed or then returned, but having clearly passed the point of no return, continued to vent his spleen, until Alexander, finally grabbing hold of a javelin, threw it clean through the old warhorse’s heart.

Cleitus was one of the first to challenge the king, but he wasn’t the last. In 327 BCE, a plot against him was betrayed, and the conspirators – his own royal pages – stoned to death. Then, later that year he struck another body blow against his traditional supporters. Callisthenes, grand-nephew of Alexander’s tutor Aristotle and one of the many historians in Alexander’s retinue, had become increasingly critical of his

delusions of grandeur, and taunted him with a line from his beloved Iliad: “A better man than you by far was Patroclus, and still death did not escape him.” In short – you’re no god, and you’ll die just like the rest of us. Alexander accused Callisthenes of collusion in the pages’ conspiracy, and had him put to death.

It was the beginning of the end. Convinced he was a god, it would be the needs of men that would bring the conquests of Alexander to heel. Adamant that they were at the edge of the world and expecting to see the great sea that the ancient Greeks believed ringed their continent from which they could return home,

TURKEY (334-333 BCE)

Alexander’s forces storm down the Turkish coast taking cities inhabited by Greek colonists, appointing new governors and collecting taxes.

SYRIA, LEBANON, PALESTINE, ISRAEL (332 BCE)

Now in Syria, Alexander sells the population of Tyre into slavery for resisting his siege, adding modern Lebanon, Palestine and Israel to his empire.

IRAN, UZBEKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, TAJIKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN (330-328 BCE)

Taking and burning the Persian capital Persepolis, Alexander claims the rest of the country and puts down rebellious tribes in Persia’s wild frontiers – now Afghanistan and parts of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.

PAKISTAN, KASHMIR, INDIA (327-326 BCE)

Crossing the Hindu Kush mountains, Alexander discovers northern India and begins a hard-fought campaign against various tribes and kingdoms – claiming what is now Pakistan, Kashmir and some of northern India before his army refuses to go on.

ALEXANDER'S ARMY

How the ancient Greeks fought and conquered



A painting showing Alexander the Great and his forces battling an Indian army

01 COMPANION CAVALRY

STRENGTHS

Well trained, wedge formation made turning easier, heavy bronze armour.

WEAKNESSES

Vulnerable to tightly packed infantry.

HOW DID ALEXANDER DEPLOY THEM?

Led by Alexander personally, the Companion Cavalry were the unstoppable knights of Macedonia. Usually stationed on the right flank, they would punch through the enemy lines with their xyston lances and then wheel round to charge the rear.

02 THESSALIAN CAVALRY

STRENGTHS

Well trained, diamond formation for manoeuvrability, variety of weapons.

WEAKNESSES

Lighter armour than most heavy cavalry.

HOW DID ALEXANDER DEPLOY THEM?

Similar to the Companion Cavalry, the Thessalian Cavalry's lighter armour and shorter spears and javelins made them an effective defensive unit. Stationed on the left flank, they could go where they were needed to see off any attackers.

03 HOPLITES

STRENGTHS

Versatile and adaptable.

WEAKNESSES

Low training, light armour.

HOW DID ALEXANDER DEPLOY THEM?

Hoplites were the citizen men-at-arms of the other Greek states and one of the army's main cornerstones. Versatile but not necessarily as well-trained or heavily armoured as other units, Hoplites were placed behind the phalanx to prevent the army being encircled.

04 PHALANX

STRENGTHS

The phalanx formation is devastating against cavalry, well trained and fast moving.

WEAKNESSES

Vulnerable in the flanks and rear, lightly equipped.

HOW DID ALEXANDER DEPLOY THEM?

Created by Alexander's father the well-drilled and fast-moving pikemen fought in the dreaded Macedonian phalanx with their 18-foot sarissa lance. Deployed in the centre of the battle line, the phalanx could rush forward to tie down enemy cavalry or infantry.

05 HYPASPISTS

The Hypaspists were Alexander's close-quarter shock troops.

STRENGTHS

Versatile close combat specialists, well-trained veterans.

WEAKNESSES

Vulnerable to cavalry and massed infantry.

HOW DID ALEXANDER DEPLOY THEM?

Macedonia's elite commandos, the Hypaspists carried large round shields, thrusting spears and swords, and were placed on the flank of the Foot Companions for their protection. Devastating in closed spaces.

06 LIGHT CAVALRY

STRENGTHS

Easily replaced, some horse archers.

WEAKNESSES

Variable equipment and training, light armour of leather or linen.

HOW DID ALEXANDER DEPLOY THEM?

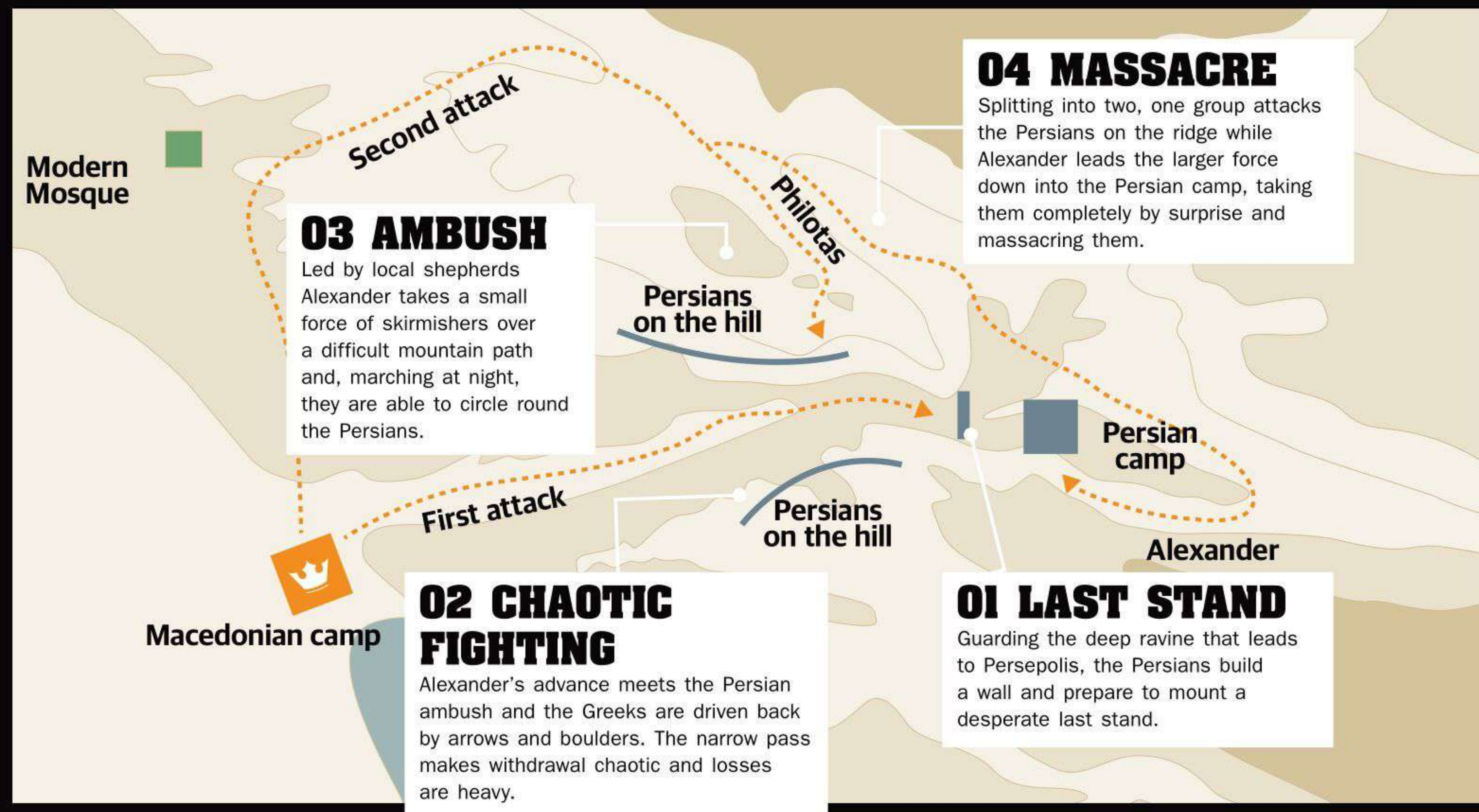
A combination of lighter armed and armoured cavalry from the other Greek states and local horsemen conscripted in Asia. Deployed dependant on weapons and training, Alexander came to rely on them as the traditional Greek heavy cavalry dwindled.

BATTLE OF THE PERSIAN GATE (331 BCE)

Alexander turns defeat into victory to take the Persian capital

Failure could have left Alexander's Persia divided between the Macedonian king and usurper Bessus, vulnerable to revolt and invasion from central Asia.

Despite a rare crushing defeat in the bloody bottleneck of the Persian ambush, Alexander was able to make use of local knowledge, as well as his hardy skirmishers and turn the wild terrain in his favour, ambushing the Persians in turn and decimating them with his two forces. Historians have called this victory 'complete' and 'decisive' and it left him able to take the ancient capital of Persepolis unopposed and claim its massive wealth for himself. On leaving the city he burnt it to the ground.



Alexander pushed his increasingly mutinous army into India. Confronted with valley after valley of new lands to conquer and battles to wage, they drove on – winning a costly victory against 200 war elephants fielded by King Porus on the banks of the Indus River. Battered and broken after 22,000 kilometres and eight years, monsoon season arrived and drenched the army in water and disease. Rumours also reached the camp that India was a bigger than they had previously heard, and contained armies even greater than that of Porus.

Alexander's generals, mindful of the fate that had befallen other critics of their king, approached cautiously and appealed to his nobility. Coenus – one of Alexander's most trusted commanders – implored him to let them return home to their families, saying so eloquently, "We have achieved so many marvellous successes, but isn't it time to set some limit? Surely you can see yourself how few are left of the original army that began this enterprise... Sire," he concluded, "the sign of a great man is knowing when to stop."

Reluctantly, the warrior king agreed. Building a temple to Dionysus on the riverbank and leaving the inscription 'Alexander stopped here', they built a fleet of flat-bottom ships and began a long voyage home. Alexander the Great's conquest began with Homer's Iliad as its guide – a tale of triumph and conquest – and ended with the Odyssey – a desperate voyage home.

There were more battles, tragedies and triumphs to come, and many would never see home thanks to the long-running battles with

the Indian kingdoms they passed through on their way down the Indus River toward the Arabian Sea, from where they could sail to Persia's southern coast. One battle in early 325 BCE against the Malhi people of Punjab nearly cost Alexander his life as a siege ladder collapsed behind him, leaving him stranded on enemy ramparts, with his bodyguard panicking below. Even with his dreams of ceaseless conquest doused like campfires before battle, Alexander fought fiercely until an arrow pierced his lung, his chroniclers describing air escaping with the blood. Even with all Alexander had subjected them to, his army remained devoted to their monarch – believing him dead, they rampaged through the city, looting, killing and burning in retaliation. Patched up by his doctor, gaunt and unsteady, Alexander had to be sailed past his army while lined up on the riverbank before they would accept he was still alive.

With one force exploring the Persian Gulf, Alexander led the remnants of his army through what is now the Balochistan province of Iran – a sparsely populated landscape of arid mountains and desert. His men died in their hundreds, gasping for water, stumbling through the baking sands in their tattered sandals and blinking into the brilliant sun. By 324 BCE they had reached the Persian city of Susa, but back in the heart of the empire he had stolen, his trials continued – his childhood friend, stalwart general and, some historians have implied, lover Hephaestion died, and then in August the Macedonians in his army mutinied. The Macedonians he placated, but the grief he felt

at the loss of "the friend I value with my own life" could not be so easily put right.

While his father died with dreams of a Persian conquest upon his lips, Alexander succumbed to a fever in 323 BCE with greater dreams still. Before his eyes poured the spears of the phalanx south into Arabia and west into Carthage and Rome. "Who shall lead us?" his followers whispered to their dying king. "The strongest," he replied, and with his passing the great empire splintered.

In his tactical genius, charismatic leadership, enduring legacy and fanatical drive, Alexander was far removed from those around him. Perhaps in his view, 'elevated' above those around him, he was so far removed as to be incomparable. He was never defeated in battle, partly because of his tactical skill, leadership and army, but also because he was prepared to pay a toll in human lives.

Tales of the Greek gods endure not just because they present an ideal of heroism and greatness, but because they were flawed beings – a soap opera on a cosmic scale. Like the squabbling deities of Mount Olympus, Alexander the Great was violent, vain, petty and cynical, and like them he overcame impossible odds and accomplished breathtaking feats through ingenuity, charisma, martial prowess and force of will. His example were venerated by emperors, tactics studied by leaders for over 2,000 years, and in the Middle East, tales of 'Alexander the Cursed's' savagery are still told in the lands he wronged. For good and ill, the shadow he casts is still the stuff of legend.

The Battle of Alexander
Versus Darius by Pietro
da Cortona





HANNIBAL BARCA

The vengeance, ingenuity and war elephants that brought the Roman Republic to its knees



Two armies waited at Zama, in October 202 BCE, ready to do battle. On the one side were the Romans, on the other the Carthaginians. At stake was the very survival of Carthage.

The commander of the Carthaginians, Hannibal Barca, had been hurriedly recalled from Italy to defend his home city from Roman attack. The young Publius Cornelius Scipio, in command of the Romans, rode out to meet him in the no-man's land between the armies. Would the Romans be interested in negotiating, Hannibal asked? Why risk a battle when peace could be had without a fight? Scipio refused outright. Carthage had already cynically used a previous truce to summon Hannibal back to Africa, he said, and then resumed the war once he arrived to command its army. Scipio accused Hannibal of now trying to profit from Carthage's own treachery.

The fates of the titanic powers of Rome and Carthage could only be decided by a great trial of arms. The generals returned to their men and prepared them for the battle to come. Hannibal would fight one last time on behalf of his people. Though he had rampaged through Italy for 16 years and had won spectacular victories there, he had been unable to defeat Rome.

Hannibal's road to Zama began even before his birth in 247 BCE, during the First Punic War with Rome. The battle for supremacy lasted more than 20 years, before Carthage finally succumbed to Roman persistence and naval might. Crushed at the battle of the Aegates Islands, Carthage was forced to accept humiliating peace terms from the triumphant Romans. The empire was stripped of its holdings in Sicily, which had been built up over centuries of colonisation, and forced to pay a huge indemnity to Rome.

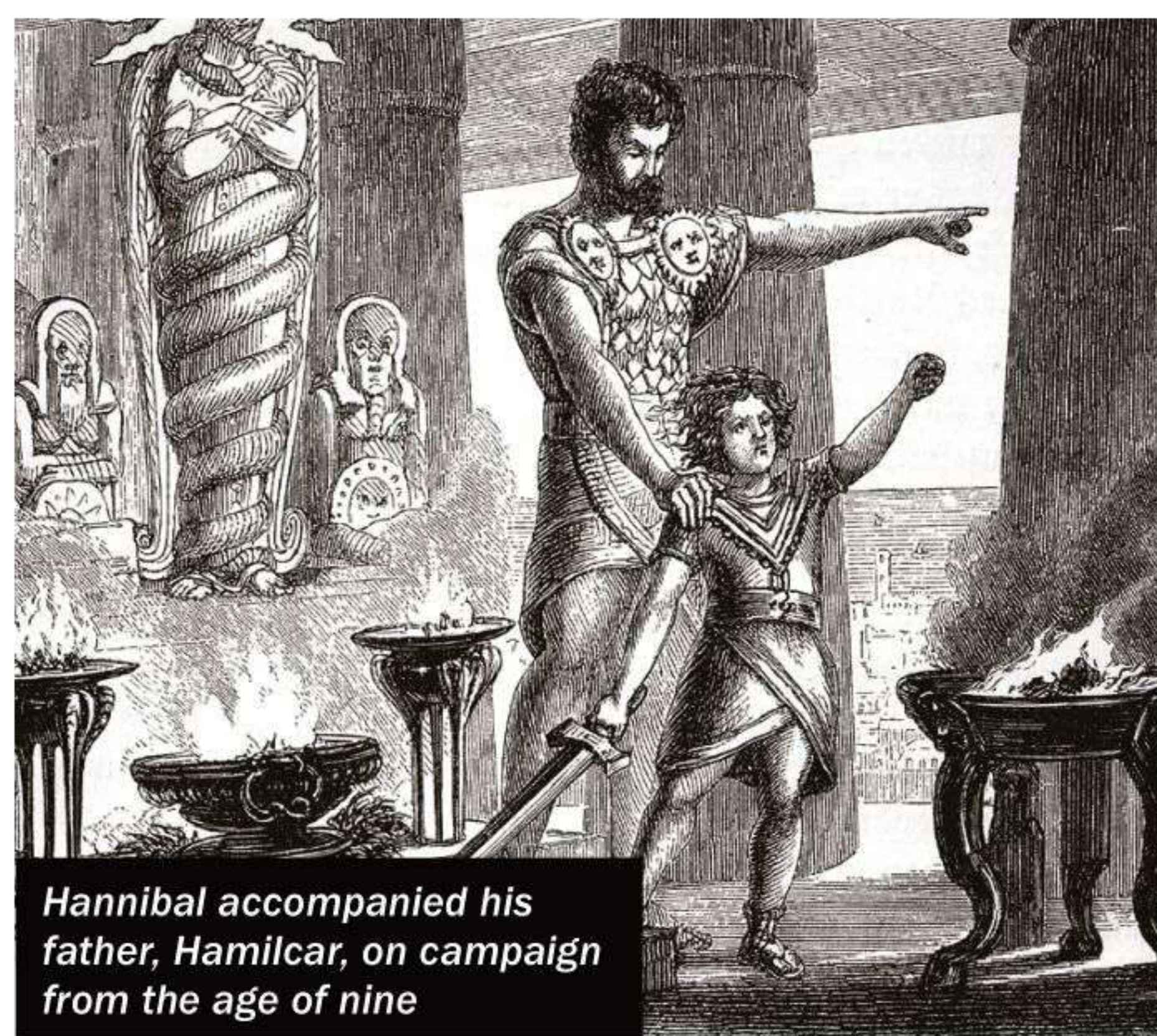
Making matters worse was the subsequent arrogant behaviour of the Romans. In 238 BCE, they seized Sardinia under the pretext that Carthage was plotting another strike on the Romans. At the time, however, Carthage was distracted by a brutal war with its former mercenaries, and could do nothing to prevent it. The theft of the island may have gone unchallenged, but it instilled a fervent desire for revenge in the hearts of many Carthaginians.

Foremost among these was Hamilcar Barca, Carthage's leading general in the latter years of the First Punic War. Hamilcar had fought the Romans to a standstill in Sicily, operating out of his base of Mount Eryx where he conducted daring hit-and-run raids on the Romans around him. The decision of Carthage's government to

make peace on Roman terms was a shock, and he never reconciled himself to defeat.

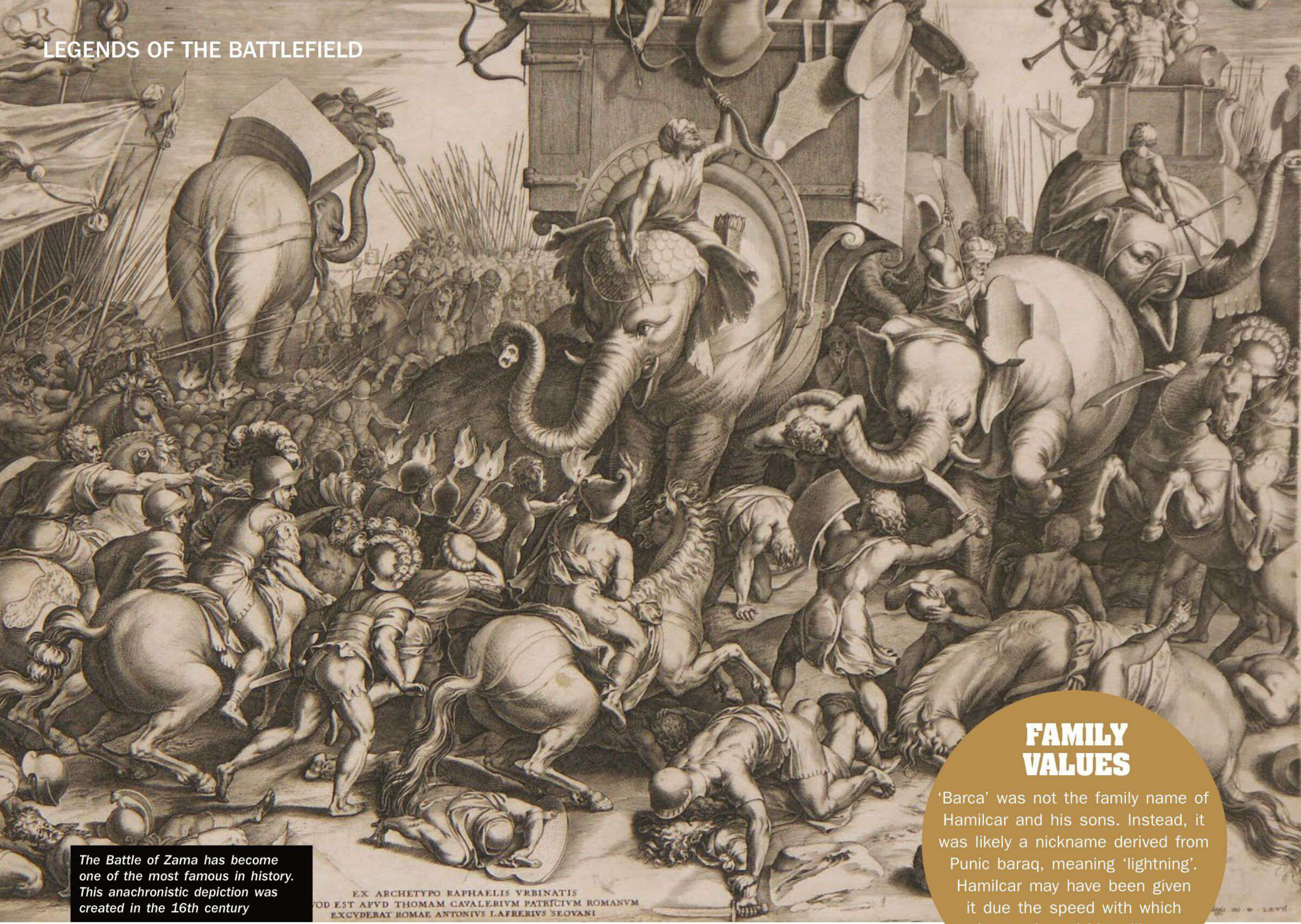
Hamilcar intended to restore Carthage's position in an eventual second war with Rome. First, however, he needed to rebuild the Carthaginian army, which had been battered by the wars with Rome and then the mercenaries. His plan was to go to Spain, where he would expand Carthage's holdings and recruit tough Spanish tribesmen to fight. Carthage's armies had long been composed exclusively of mercenaries from around the Mediterranean world. Only the officers were natives of Carthage; the rest were foreigners. From Africa, Spain, Gaul, and the Balearic Isles they came, lured by the generous pay of the Carthaginians. Among the best fighters were the superb light cavalry of Numidia in North Africa. The Romans would be at a deep disadvantage in battle until they found a way to recruit Numidians of their own.

Wealth was something Carthage normally possessed in abundance. Known to the Romans as 'Punics' because their ancestors had originally come from Phoenicia, the Carthaginians had the same talent for commerce. After the war with Rome, however, money was in short supply and Carthage was burdened by the weighty indemnity. In search of much-needed silver and territory, Hamilcar led an expedition to the Iberian Peninsula in 237 BCE. He was confident they would be successful, having taken part in a sacred ritual before departing: a human had been sacrificed to the gods. Hamilcar had brought his nine-year-old son, Hannibal, to the altar, made him place his hand on the blood of the victim and swear his unending hatred of the Romans.



Hannibal accompanied his father, Hamilcar, on campaign from the age of nine





The Battle of Zama has become one of the most famous in history. This anachronistic depiction was created in the 16th century

FAMILY VALUES

‘Barca’ was not the family name of Hamilcar and his sons. Instead, it was likely a nickname derived from Punic baraq, meaning ‘lightning’. Hamilcar may have been given it due the speed with which he conducted his military operations.

A MILITARY DYNASTY



HANNIBAL BARCA

Hannibal took hold of the Carthaginian dominion in Spain and led a highly trained army of mercenaries out of Spain, across Gaul, into Italy. Though he won spectacular victories over several Roman armies, he lacked the power to defeat Rome completely. He tried to prevent the final defeat of Carthage at Zama but was defeated by Scipio.



HAMILCAR BARCA

Hannibal’s father Hamilcar was Carthage’s finest general of the First Punic War, skilfully leading attacks on Roman forces there, but he was embittered by eventual defeat. After putting down a massive revolt of mercenaries in 238 BCE, he began to increase Carthage’s holdings in Spain, but was killed before he could begin his war of vengeance against Rome.



HASDRUBAL BARCA

Younger brother to Hannibal, Hasdrubal Barca was one of Carthage’s primary generals in Spain. He was defeated by Scipio at Baecula in 208 BCE but still managed to march with his army to Hannibal’s aid in Italy. He was slain at the Battle of the Metaurus in 207 BCE.



MAGO BARCA

The youngest of Hamilcar’s sons, Mago commanded a Carthaginian army in Spain and was defeated by Scipio at Ilipa in 206 BCE. He evacuated Spain shortly after and established a second front against Rome in northern Italy. He was recalled to Carthage in 203 BCE to stop Scipio but died en route while still at sea.

The young boy is said to have recited the oath: "I swear so soon as age will permit I will use fire and steel to arrest the destiny of Rome." It was a promise the young Hannibal would keep.

Together, father and son sailed for Iberia, and their forces were ruthless in their suppression of the Spanish. Hamilcar killed many, and recruited others to his cause. He also increased the productivity of Spanish mines, sending silver by the shipful to Carthage. With this money, Hamilcar easily paid the mercenaries of his swelling army. Yet Hamilcar was never to lead this army of vengeance against Rome. In 228 BCE, he was betrayed by Spanish allies, and died trying to escape them. Control of Carthage's army in Spain eventually fell to Hannibal, who had been raised among the soldiers of his father and held their unwavering loyalty. He increased Carthage's dominion in the peninsula, but then ran into trouble when he struck at Saguntum, a city friendly with Rome. Though he quickly captured it, his aggression caused Rome to declare war on Carthage in 218 BCE.

Hannibal lost little time in putting into motion his plan for the invasion of Italy. He believed that Rome could be defeated by stripping the Republic of its Italian allies, many of which had been brought under Roman dominion by force only recently. Since the Romans had won control of the sea in the First Punic War, Hannibal would have to take the long overland route across Gaul to strike in Italy. He marched out of Spain at the head of an army of 50,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry, and a small corps of elephants. The trek through southern Gaul was arduous, and along the way he encountered hostile Gallic tribes who bled his army. He crossed the mighty Rhône river and then marched through the Alps, the traditional frontier of Italy.

Traversing the Alps cost Hannibal's army dearly. By the time he reached the lowlands on the other side, he had just 12,000 African troops, 8,000 Spaniards, 6,000 cavalry and had just a handful of elephants left. Hannibal had lost over half of his forces simply reaching Italy; what could he possibly achieve against the far more numerous Romans? What followed proved that Hannibal Barca was one of the greatest military minds of all time.

At the Battle of the Trebia in 218 BCE, he pretended to flee before the overeager Romans, who rashly pursued him. Unknown to them, Hannibal had cleverly deployed some 1,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry under the command of his youngest brother, Mago Barca, in a concealed position behind some marsh reeds. When the Romans passed them, the Carthaginians ambushed. The Romans were taken completely by surprise, and their army of some 40,000 was crushed, with just 10,000 escaping the trap alive.

Worse was to come. In 217 BCE, Hannibal met a Roman army head-on at Lake Trasimene. The battle was, "...savage at every point," wrote the

"HE HAD DEFEATED THREE ROMAN ARMIES, INFLECTING TERRIBLE LOSSES, BUT THE ROMANS COULD ALWAYS RAISE NEW LEGIONS"

Roman historian Livy. Valour was not enough to turn the tide against the better-led Carthaginian army. The Roman general Gaius Flaminius was slain, along with 15,000 of his men, though the Carthaginians lost some 2,500 of their own troops, too. In a bid to win the support of the local people, Hannibal began to free his non-Roman Italian prisoners of war. Stunned and severely beaten, the Romans began to understand that Hannibal was no ordinary general. They appointed Quintus Fabius Maximus as dictator, a post that carried with it vast powers to be used only in a time of emergency.

Hannibal continued to cause havoc throughout Italy as he marched south. Fabius dogged him at every turn, always refusing outright to battle with the nigh-invincible Hannibal. Instead, Fabius picked off straggling Carthaginians or fought small skirmishes to restore Roman confidence. This strategy brought modest but real results. It also caused dissatisfaction among more aggressive Romans who wanted to take on Hannibal once again. They called Fabius 'cunctator' (meaning 'delayer') for his unwillingness to face the enemy in battle, and despite restoring Roman fortunes, Fabius's six-month dictatorship was not extended.

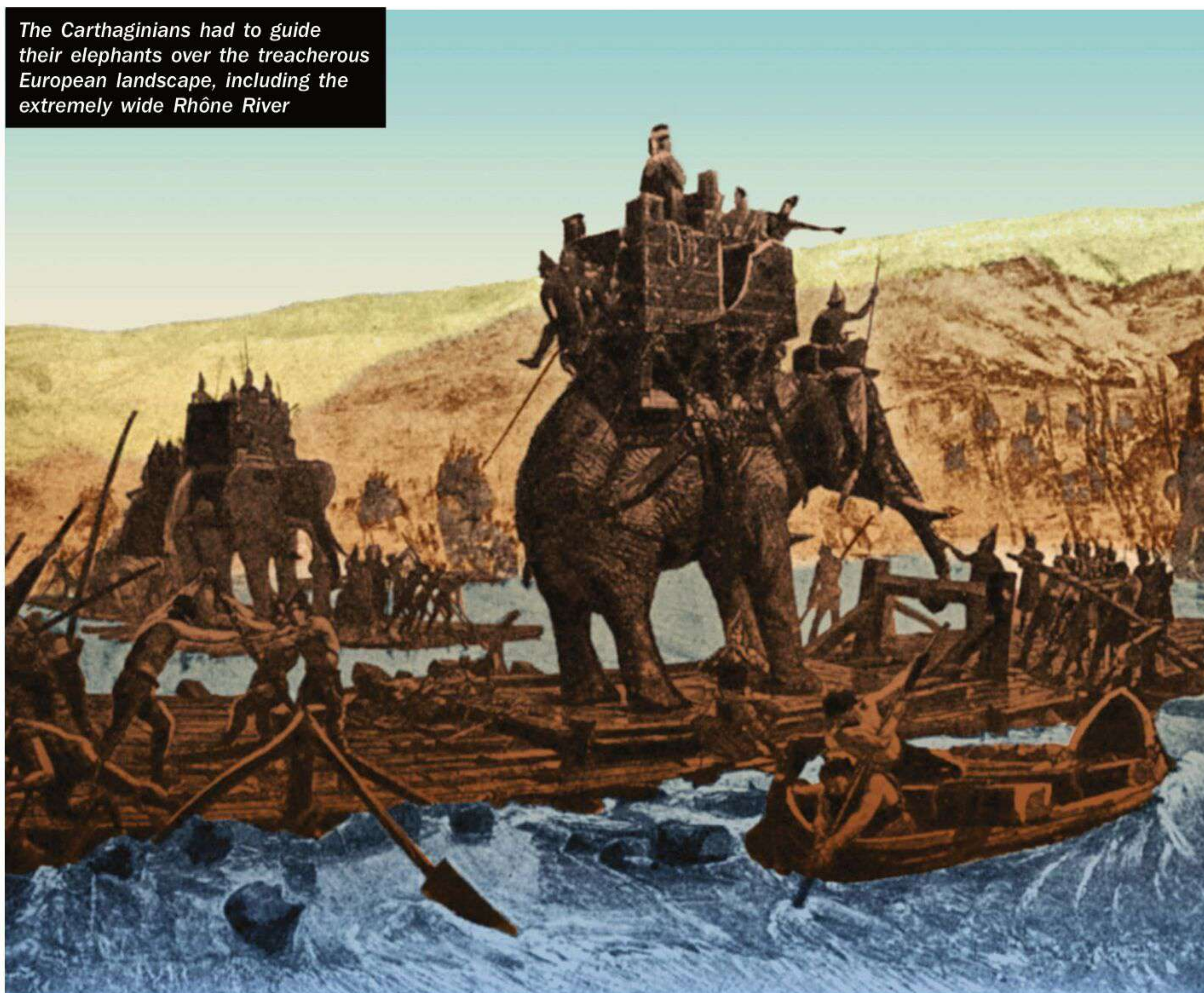
In the following year, a Roman army of unprecedented size – some 80,000 men – met

Hannibal in a pitched battle at Cannae in southern Italy. The Romans charged ahead, pushing their way deep into the Carthaginian centre, which seemed to give way. However, this was all part of Hannibal's cunning plan, and as the Romans pressed forward, the wings of his army closed in. Trapped, the Romans became so closely packed that they could not even swing their swords and were slain almost to a man. "Some were discovered lying there alive," Livy wrote, "with thighs and tendons slashed, baring their necks and throats and bidding their conquerors drain the remnant of their blood." About 50,000 Romans died in that single day.

In the aftermath of Cannae, Maharbal, Hannibal's cavalry commander, urged him to strike at Rome, promising that they would be having dinner there in just four days if he did so. But Hannibal did not march immediately on Rome. The Carthaginian army was exhausted and he had lost thousands of men. He had defeated three Roman armies, inflicting terrible losses, but the Romans could always raise new legions. Hannibal, on the other hand, had bled his own army white in winning these battles, and may have been left too weak to contemplate a siege of Rome at this time.

When Hannibal refused to follow his subordinate's advice, a frustrated Maharbal

The Carthaginians had to guide their elephants over the treacherous European landscape, including the extremely wide Rhône River



ZAMA: THE BATTLE THAT NEVER WAS?

Professor Yozan Mosig on why there’s so much doubt surrounding the event

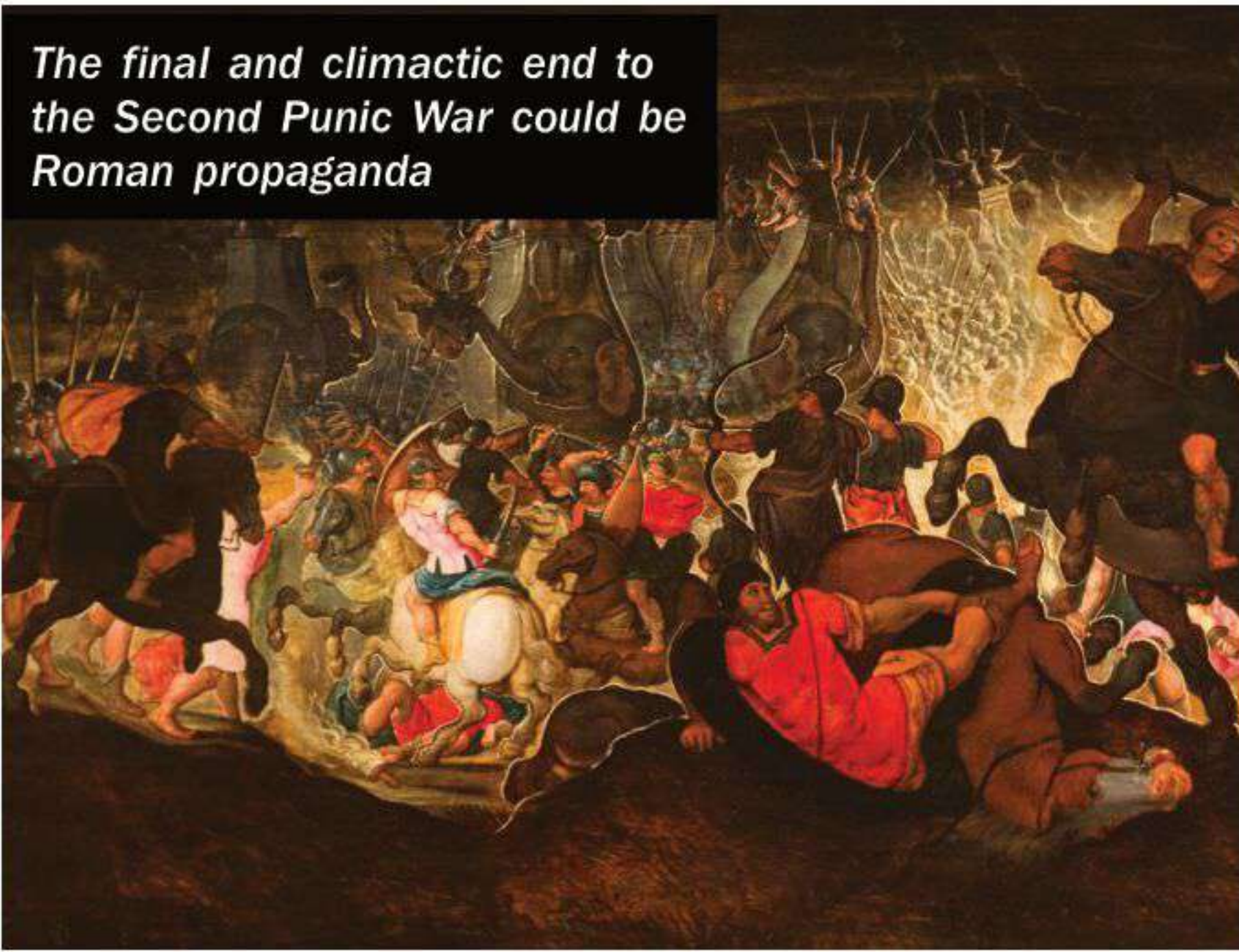
WHAT DON’T WE KNOW ABOUT ZAMA?

No one has been able to find the exact location of the battle. The village of Jama, close to Siliana, some 150 kilometres southwest of Tunis, and a number of other candidates have been suggested but without archaeological verification. The site remains unknown, while those of practically all other major battles waged during the Second Punic War are reasonably well established. This is particularly troublesome in view of the Romans’ penchant for erecting monuments in situ to commemorate their greatest victories – there is not even a lonely column, statue or ruin marking the place.

ARE THERE DISTORTIONS ABOUT THE BATTLE OF ZAMA IN THE HISTORICAL RECORD THAT NEED CORRECTING?

The classical accounts of the Battle of Zama are strangely inconsistent and contradictory. The course of the struggle is unimaginative to the point of being suspect as the alleged outcome of a first-rate military mind such as Hannibal’s and even Scipio’s. It reads more like the invention of a writer lacking the vision of a great general. The 80 elephants are not credible, in view of their lack at the preceding battles of Utica and the Great Plains.

The recent dating of the famed military Punic port of Carthage to the 2nd rather than the 3rd century BCE has created a paradox leading to further doubts. According to HR Hurst, in his *Excavations At Carthage*, the port was built at some point between 201 and 146 BCE, after the end of the war. As Abdelaziz Belkhouja argues in his book, *Hannibal Barca: L’histoire Veritable Et Le Mensonge De Zama* (2014), this casts serious doubts on the authenticity of the peace treaty that Carthage was required to sign after the alleged defeat at Zama. The treaty, which dates back to 201 BCE, limited the Carthaginian navy to no more than ten warships, but the port had berths for 220, which means that at least that provision of the treaty is fictitious. If the war ended with a peace agreement giving concessions to Rome and without the dissolution of the Punic navy, as proposed by Hannibal in his meeting with Scipio, no final battle was needed. The construction of the military port after the war would then make sense, as would the lack of a monument to mark the location of the fictitious battle. It is therefore possible that the Battle of Zama was a fabrication of Roman propaganda to heal their wounded pride from Hannibal’s undefeated years in Italy, and especially their defeat at Cannae, which necessitated creating the illusion of having achieved a comparable victory.



The final and climactic end to the Second Punic War could be Roman propaganda



This 15th-century Italian painting embodies the classical idea of the 'noble savage'

remarked, “You know how to win a battle, Hannibal; you do not know how to use the victory.” This decision was one of his most controversial. Rome might well have fallen to the Carthaginians had he appeared outside its gates soon after Cannae. Instead, the Romans found the will to continue the war, and, by and large, Rome’s allies stood by them.

Hannibal would enjoy limited successes in Italy after Cannae. The city of Capua defected to him in 216 BCE and, in 212 BCE, Tarentum joined his cause too. But these were scattered victories and reinforcements from Carthage were very limited. The Romans could not eject Hannibal from his base in southern Italy, but he could not defeat Rome either, and so a stalemate prevailed.

When the war began, the Romans had shrewdly sent an army to Spain to put pressure on the Carthaginians there. Hannibal, in his eagerness to get to grips with the Romans in Italy, had left behind him an incompletely pacified territory, and Rome found willing allies there who wanted the Carthaginians gone. The Romans suffered terrible reverses in Spain, but it also became a training ground for the one Roman general who would prove to be a match for Hannibal in military skill: Publius Cornelius Scipio. With his father and uncle killed, Scipio was just 25 years old when he took command of Roman forces. He was no callow youth, but a battle-hardened survivor of the disaster at Cannae.

After seizing the main Carthaginian stronghold of Carthago Nova in a surprise assault in 209 BCE, Scipio next defeated Hannibal’s brother, Hasdrubal Barca, at the Battle of Baecula. This was followed by another victory at the Battle of Ilipa in 206 BCE over Hasdrubal Gisgo and Hannibal’s brother Mago. All the while, Scipio

strengthened his soldiers and developed the tactics that would eventually make the Romans more than a match for the mercenaries who fought for Carthage.

While Hannibal was in Italy, unable to do much against a Rome that had largely recovered from its earlier defeats, Scipio was developing into one of the finest generals Rome would ever produce. Mago would quit Spain altogether by 205 BCE, leaving Scipio as the master of the country. The loss of this territory also encouraged Massinissa,

a Numidian prince, to switch his loyalty to Rome. Scipio would later have use of the excellent cavalry Massinissa brought with him, and this would go a long way to remedy the Roman weakness in cavalry that had long plagued them in their battles with the Carthaginians.

In 208 BCE, the Carthaginians launched a major bid to bring aid to Hannibal,

but this did not come directly from Carthage. Instead, Hannibal’s brother, Hasdrubal Barca, escaped Scipio’s clutches and marched his army out of Spain. He retraced his brother’s footsteps through southern Gaul to Italy, which he reached in 207 BCE. Lying between Hasdrubal and his older brother in the south were the Roman legions. The Romans struck at Hasdrubal before they could join together and smashed his army along the Metaurus River, killing some 10,000 of his Spanish and African mercenaries. Hannibal learned of his younger brother’s defeat only when the Romans tossed Hasdrubal’s head into his army’s camp. “Now, at last,” Hannibal said grimly, “I see the destiny of Carthage plain!”

Having driven the Carthaginians from Spain, Scipio was placed in command of a large army in Sicily, which he then took to Africa in 204 BCE for a final showdown with Carthage. After landing, Scipio besieged the city of Utica and then

“THE ROMANS COULD NOT EJECT HANNIBAL FROM HIS BASE IN SOUTHERN ITALY, BUT HE COULD NOT DEFEAT ROME EITHER”

defeated a large Carthaginian army sent against him. Scipio was successful in all his endeavours, and Carthage sued for peace. In 203 BCE, while peace terms were being discussed under truce, Hannibal and his brother Mago, who was now in northern Italy, were recalled home.

It is said that Hannibal was furious when this recall order reached him, and that he complained bitterly that his government had not supported him during the 16 years he had campaigned against the Romans in Italy. However, at the root of it all, Hannibal had only himself to blame. He had incautiously moved against Saguntum years before, bringing on a war with Rome when Carthage was not fully prepared to wage one. He then invaded Italy with an army that was too small to win that war, no matter how many battles he was able to win with it.

For many years after Cannae, he was unable to do more than hold his own as events unfolded elsewhere, such as in Sicily and Spain. The city of Syracuse, which fell to Carthage in 215 BCE, was captured three years later in 212 BCE, and Spain was entirely in Roman hands by 205 BCE.

Capua was retaken by the Romans in 211 BCE, as was Tarentum in 209 BCE. Over time, Hannibal's army deteriorated, while the Romans fielded ever more legions that they used to hold him at bay in southern Italy. With eventual Roman victory looking ever more certain, Hannibal's allies in Italy began to desert him. Hannibal was forced

to make his last refuge in Bruttium, in the toe of Italy, where he remained until his recall.

With Hannibal back in Africa (Mago would die at sea from wounds while on his way home) the Carthaginian government regained a measure of confidence, and peace negotiations with Rome broke down. War resumed, and Hannibal was put in command of Carthage's remaining troops. With an army of about 40,000, comprising his best troops rescued from Italy and whatever else he could scrape together, including a handful of elephants, Hannibal met Scipio in battle at Zama in 202 BCE in modern Tunisia. Alarming, he was weaker in cavalry than Scipio, who had the aid of 4,000 of Massinissa's fine Numidian horsemen.

In the hard-fought battle that followed, the Romans had the better of the Carthaginians. Roman tactics had vastly improved after years of war and were no longer simplistic headlong rushes at the enemy. Scipio's men deftly stepped aside as Hannibal's elephants thundered through their lines, and then surrounded and slew the beasts. Hannibal's troops wavered and then cracked when the Roman and allied Numidian cavalry swung around and attacked them in their rear. The Carthaginian army crumbled, and Hannibal was forced to flee the field.

The Carthaginian government again sued for peace, and in 201 BCE, the long war that had begun 17 years earlier officially came to an end. Subsequently Hannibal did much to restore

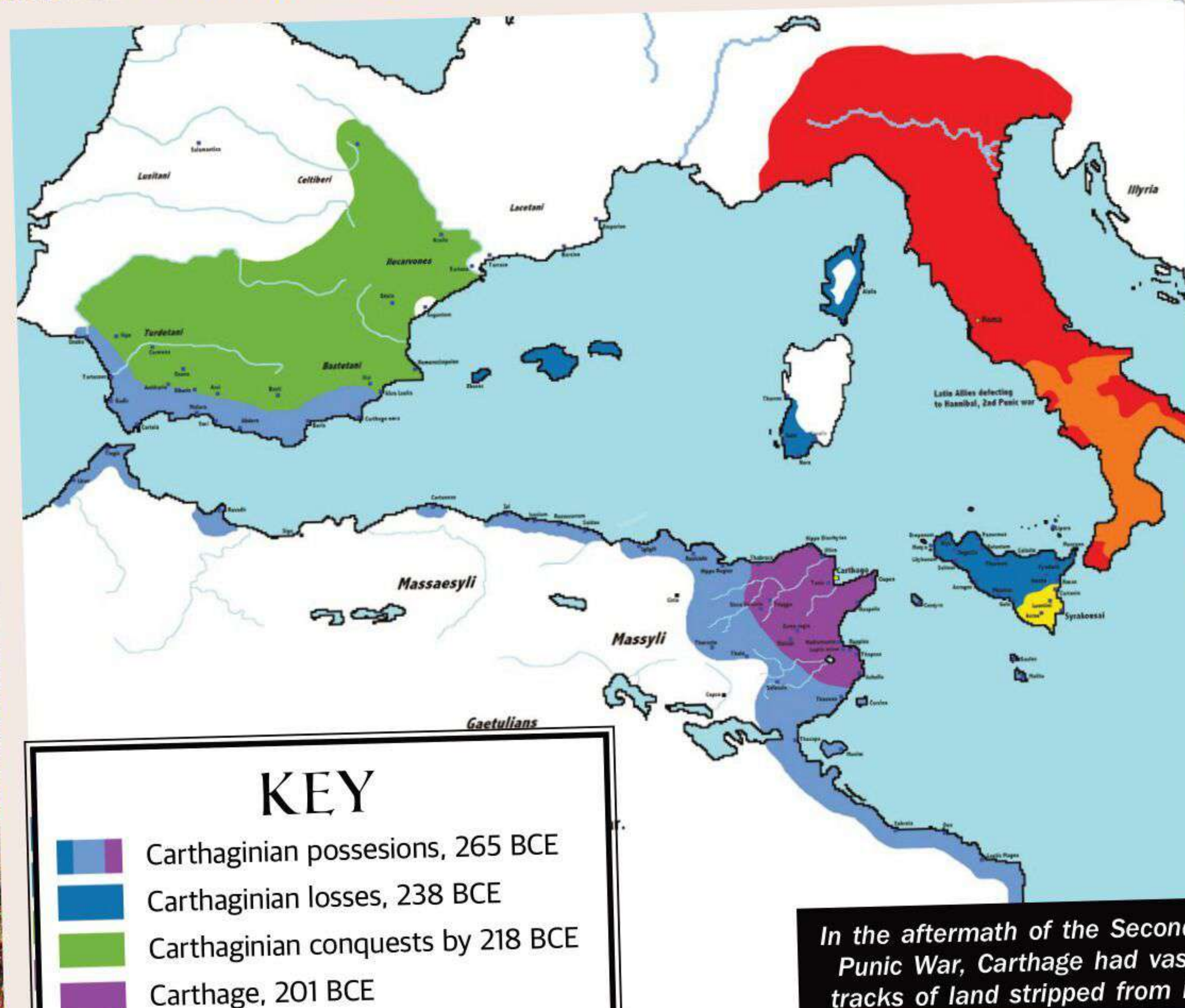
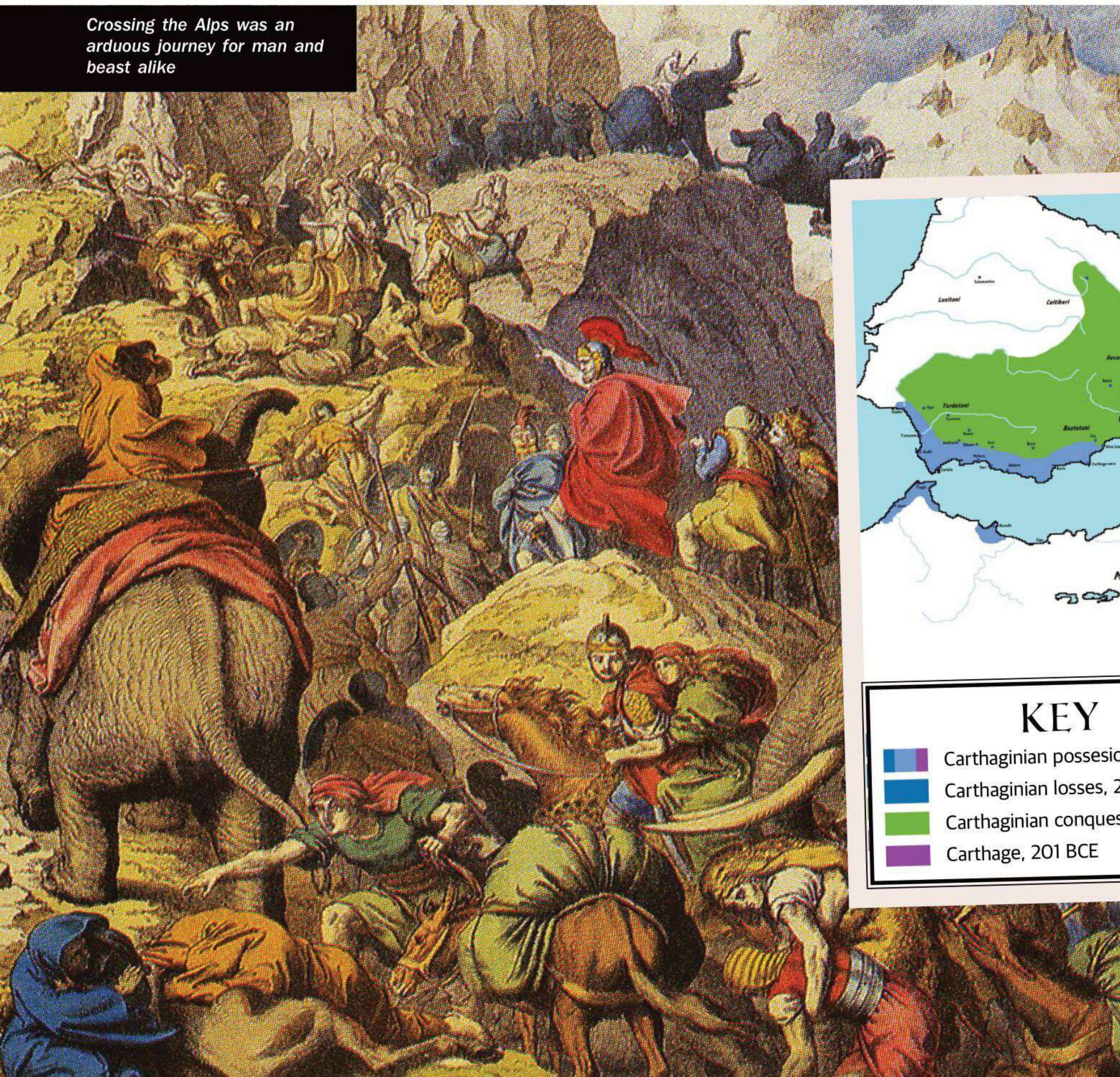
WHY DIDN'T CARTHAGE DO MORE FOR HANNIBAL?

Hannibal's home government in Carthage proved reluctant to send him reinforcements after Cannae. Carthage was not unified behind Hannibal in seeking to fight a war to the death with Rome in Italy, and many leading Carthaginians preferred instead to send newly raised mercenary troops elsewhere, especially to Spain, which was now under attack by Roman legions, and to Sicily, where they hoped to re-establish the positions they had lost after the First Punic War. Hannibal would be reinforced just once following his great victory at Cannae, with a relative handful of troops delivered to him in 215 BCE.

We can discount the notion that Roman sea power prevented Carthage from ever trying to do more for Hannibal. While Rome had the stronger navy, it was not so powerful that it could prevent any and all Punic sea-borne crossings. Successful reinforcement missions were sent to Spain in 215 BCE and 207 BCE. A crossing was also made to Sicily in 213 BCE and then again in 212 BCE. In 205 BCE, Hannibal's brother Mago travelled by sea with his troops from Spain to northern Italy and was himself reinforced by Carthage in 204 BCE. It is clear then that the Carthaginians could have sent reinforcements by sea to Hannibal. They made the conscious decision not to.

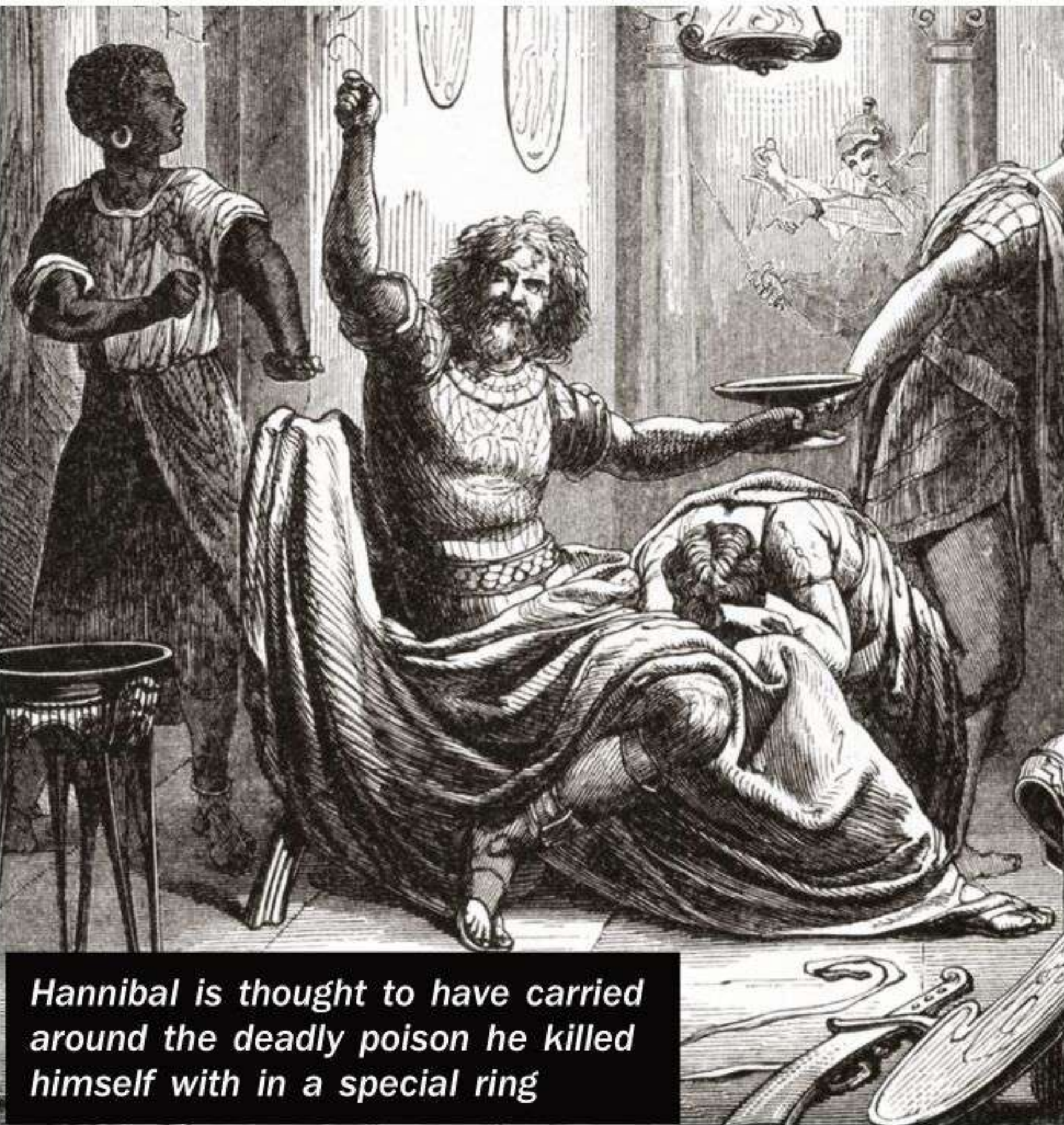
Hannibal's political opponents in Carthage noted that despite Hannibal's grand triumphs in Italy, he had failed to detach any of Rome's Latin allies, the foundation of its power, from the Republic. Thus, they argued, Hannibal had gotten no closer to defeating Rome than when he entered Italy in 218 BCE. For the bulk of Carthage's leading citizens, Hannibal was useful in keeping large numbers of Roman soldiers busy in Italy after Cannae while the more important contests for Spain, Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia played themselves out.

Crossing the Alps was an arduous journey for man and beast alike



Carthaginian finances to better pay the huge indemnity the Romans placed on them. Roman connivance with anti-Barcid factions in Carthage saw him driven out of the city, but Hannibal would never give up the struggle against Rome. In 191 BCE, he was commanding fleets against the Romans on behalf of King Antiochus the Great of the Seleucid Empire.

After Rome’s eventual triumph over the Seleucids, Hannibal made his way to the kingdom of Bithynia in Asia Minor. Roman vengeance found him there, and they pressured its king to extradite him to Rome. King Prusias agreed to do so, and in c.183 BCE, he sent his soldiers to Hannibal’s house to place him under arrest. Knowing well what fate was in store for him if he fell into Roman hands, Hannibal poisoned himself. One of the greatest generals of antiquity lay dead by his own hand.



ROME’S DARKEST DAY

The Battle of Cannae was one of the worst disasters that ever befell a Roman army. Often aggressive to a fault, the Romans were, for a time at least, chastened by the thrashings they had received at the hands of the wily Hannibal Barca and his army at the Trebia river and at Lake Trasimene. Shocked by the scale of their defeats, they followed the cautious military policy of the dictator Quintus Fabius Maximus. After a while, however, they could no longer abide the Carthaginian general pillaging his way through Italy virtually unchallenged. They insisted on once again confronting Hannibal in a pitched battle.

In 216 BCE, the Romans elected consuls who would seek to bring Hannibal to account. These were Lucius Aemilius Paullus and his colleague, Gaius Terentius Varro. In all, their army numbered about 80,000 men. This giant muster marched on Hannibal in Apulia in south-eastern Italy, finding him at Cannae in late July 216 BCE. The Romans made matters more difficult for themselves by alternating command of their army between the two consuls. Paullus would have command of it on one day, and Varro the next, and so on. On the day of battle, 2 August 216 BCE, overall command rested in the hands of Varro.

Roman battle tactics of the period were very simple – essentially a straightforward rush at the enemy intended to overwhelm him by brute force alone. The Roman legionary was a highly skilled and very efficient killer, fighting as heavy infantry in several ranks. In contrast, the Carthaginian army at Cannae was a heterogeneous mix of troops from all over the Mediterranean world. It was perhaps

Hannibal’s greatest talent to weld such men into a cohesive, successful fighting force. He made good use of the varied troops at his disposal. Knowing that the Gauls and Spaniards that were on foot in the centre of his line would likely be pushed back by the Roman infantry charge, he positioned them well forward of his wings, in an effort to use the Romans’ own power against them. During their charge, the legionaries drove the Gallic and Spanish warriors backwards, and succeeded in punching their way through, only to find that by doing so, they had helped to encircle themselves. When the gore-drenched day of 2 August came to an end, close to 50,000 Romans lay dead on the battlefield.

“THE ROMAN LEGIONARY WAS A HIGHLY SKILLED AND VERY EFFICIENT KILLER”



HANNIBAL’S MERCENARIES

NUMIDIAN

Numidians provided Hannibal with fantastic light cavalry. Riding up to the enemy, the unarmoured Numidians would hurl javelins, retire, and then attack once more.



IBERIAN (SPANIARD)

Iberian Spanish infantry wore white tunics and carried a small round shield. Their typical weapons were the falcata, a curved sword well suited for chopping, and javelins.



LIBYPHOENICIAN

The Libyphoenicians from North Africa spoke Punic but were not Carthaginian citizens. They mainly fought as heavy infantry with a spear, armour and a large shield. By Cannae, many had re-equipped with captured Roman weapons and armour.



THE BATTLE BEGINS

Hasdrubal's cavalry drives off the Roman horse on the Roman right wing. Meanwhile, Maharbal's Numidians battle the Italian allied cavalry on the Roman left. As the lines of infantry close, they hurl their javelins at each other. The fighting becomes hand-to-hand and both sides fight fiercely. The Romans begin to push the Gauls and Spaniards backward.

THE ROMANS ADVANCE

Numbering some 80,000 men, the Romans under their consuls Gaius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus approach the Carthaginians confidently, intending to smash through them. Varro is on the Roman left with the Italian allied cavalry, while Paullus is on the right with the Roman cavalry.

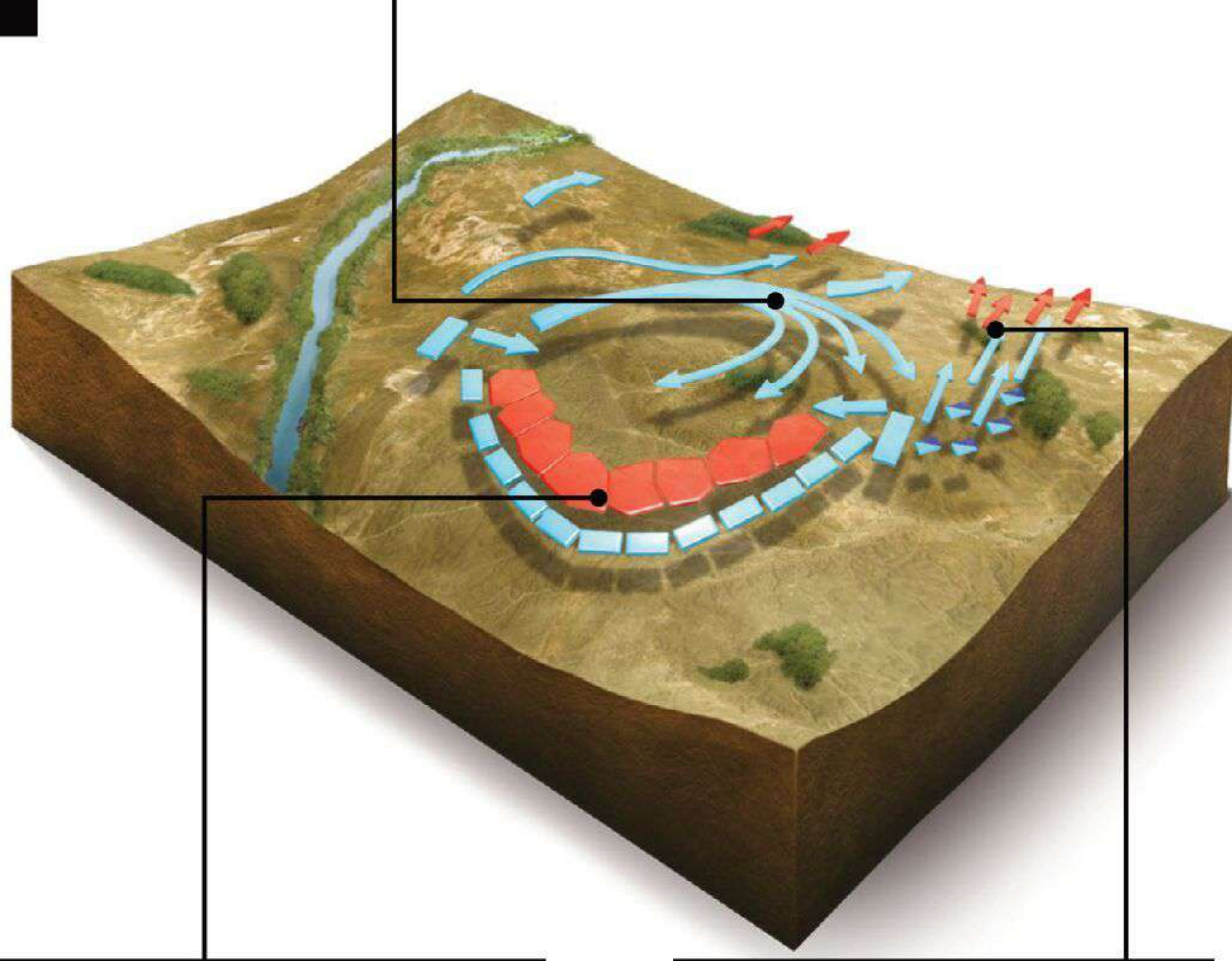
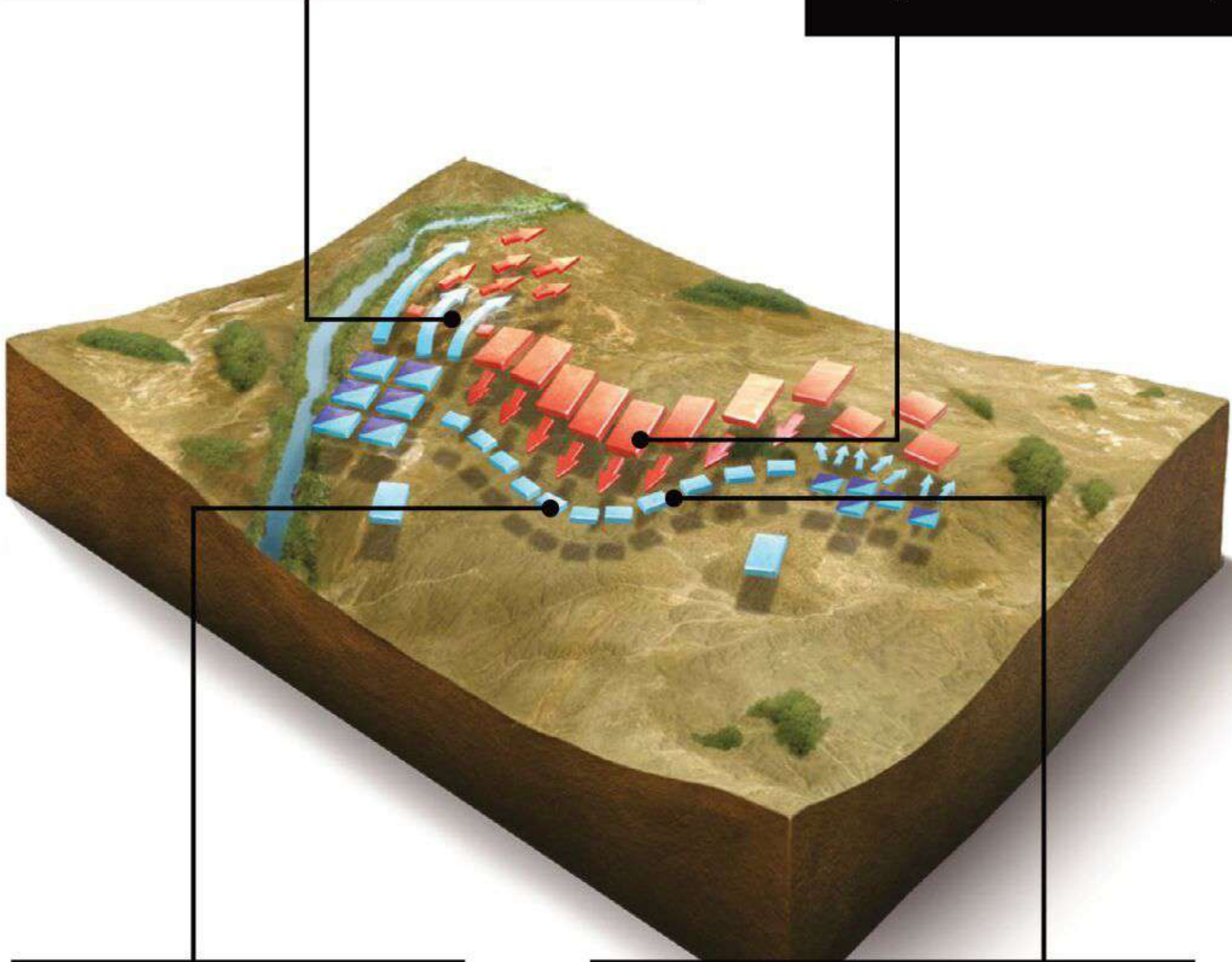
SURROUNDED

Hasdrubal's horsemen on the Carthaginian left reform, wheel around and attack the Italian allied cavalry under Varro in the rear, who flee for their lives, pursued by the Numidians. Hasdrubal next descends on the rear of the Roman infantry. The Romans find themselves totally surrounded by their enemies.

KEY

 Carthaginian army

 Roman army



HANNIBAL AND HIS CAPTAINS

Hannibal and his brother Mago are in the centre with the Gallic and Spanish foot. Hasdrubal is in command of the Gallic and Spanish heavy cavalry on the Punic left wing, while Maharbal leads the Numidian light cavalry on the right.

THE CARTHAGINIAN LINE

Hannibal forms his outnumbered army of 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry into a convex line. The Carthaginian centre is advanced ahead of the wings, with the left wing touching the Aufidus river. Hannibal has strong cavalry forces deployed on both flanks, with his Gallic and Spanish infantry between them. His African infantrymen are held in reserve.

A ROMAN BREAKTHROUGH?

The infantry battle seems to be going the Romans' way as their legionaries drive the enemy before them, and finally achieve a breakthrough. Then, Hannibal's African infantry turn inward and strike the tired and disordered legionaries in both flanks. The Gauls and Spaniards themselves reform and get back into the fight.

SLAUGHTER

A massacre ensues as the Punic noose tightens around the doomed Romans. Some legionaries cannot even swing their swords as they are bunched so tightly together. Consul Paullus is slain and, by the end of a day of brutal slaughter, about 50,000 Romans lie dead, along with some 8,000 Carthaginian troops.

GAUL

Gallic tribesmen fought in large numbers for Hannibal. Their infantry fought with large shields and long swords. Many wore mail armour, but others also fought naked down to the waist.



CARTHAGINIAN

Carthaginian citizens rarely served in the army, and usually only as officers. Crucifixion often awaited an unsuccessful general.



CELTIBERIAN (SPANIARD)

A fusion of Celtic newcomers with the native Spanish, the Celtiberians commonly wielded straight swords, carried large shields, and often wore helmets and mail armour.



BALEARIC ISLANDER

The unarmoured slingers from the Balearic Isles (Majorca and Minorca) in Hannibal's army each carried three slings of varying lengths for use at differing ranges.





JULIUS CAESAR

The charismatic strongman promised to make Rome great again but ended up making himself dictator for life



Julius Caesar was born in July 100 BCE, although the month of 'July' was not yet named after him, and was called Quintilis. Carthage had been destroyed in 146 BCE, and the powers of the Greek east had cowed into submission, leaving the Roman Republic dominant all around the Mediterranean. But all was not well.

A few months later, political rioting led to a massacre in the Roman Forum. However, this was not the first outbreak of such violence. In 133, a popular politician by the name of Tiberius Gracchus had been brutally beaten to death along with many of his supporters.

Worse was to follow. When Caesar was 12 years old, a disgruntled general by the name of Sulla turned his legions on Rome and seized control of the city, killing his opponents and anyone who dared to stand in his way. Sulla then departed to fight a war against Mithridates, king of Pontus (now northern Turkey). Barely a year later, Rome found itself being stormed by another army, this time led by enemies who had escaped, regrouped and returned to wreak bloody vengeance.

When Sulla returned victorious from Pontus, the civil war had grown in size and brutality. He retook the city of Rome in 82 BCE, posting the proscriptions in the Forum – death lists that allowed anyone to kill those named on them.

If they brought the victim's severed head to the authorities, they could claim a share of the deceased's confiscated property.

A teenaged Caesar was married to Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, one of Sulla's main opponents, and he was condemned to death when he refused to divorce her. For months he lived as a hunted fugitive, until family connections (and the simple fact that he was too young and obscure to be worth killing) gained him the pardon he had long been hoping for.

Like the United Kingdom today, the Roman Republic had no formal constitution and relied instead on a mix of law, tradition and habit to keep the wheels of public life turning. Caesar once cynically said that the "Republic is nothing", yet tradition guided most of his actions, and the principle that no one individual or group should ever possess permanent, supreme power was fundamental. The senior executive officers of the state were the two consuls, who were elected for just 12 months and ineligible for standing for the post again until a decade had passed. In an emergency, such as when Hannibal Barca was marauding around Italy during the Second Punic War in 218-204 BCE, a dictator was appointed. They led the state without a colleague for up to six months.

Sulla revived the title as a legal veil for power seized by military force. He carried out a series

of reforms, intended to restore long-term stability by confirming the old traditions of public life and restoring the prestige and influence of the Senate. Having done his best to make the machinery of the state function again and packed the Senate with his supporters, Sulla resigned his powers and retired to private life. Caesar mocked him as a "political illiterate" for doing so.

While Sulla retired to a life of peace, Rome had no such luck. Some of the dictator's reforms were overturned within a decade and no one could eradicate the memory of civil war – of severed heads stuck on spikes on the Speakers' Platform in the Forum and corpses floating down the Tiber. Caesar and his contemporaries had seen all of these things, and there was no reason to believe that they could not happen again.

**"HE WAS CONDEMNED TO DEATH
WHEN HE REFUSED TO
DIVORCE HER"**

Less than a year after Sulla had retired, one of the consuls staged an unsuccessful coup and was executed. Men like Caesar, Cicero and Pompey the Great knew that public life might turn violent at any moment and that their rivals could easily resort to force. So, Caesar did not overthrow a

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LEGENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

healthy and stable Republic but one that was struggling to cope with the pressures of holding together an expanding empire.

With the benefit of hindsight, people claimed that Sulla and others may have predicted Caesar's dictatorship, but there is no evidence that he had any wider ambition than to excel, just like any other aristocrat. There were no political parties in Rome as we would understand them today – office could not be shared by multiple people. Candidates rarely voiced any policies and instead boasted of their personal ability and achievements.

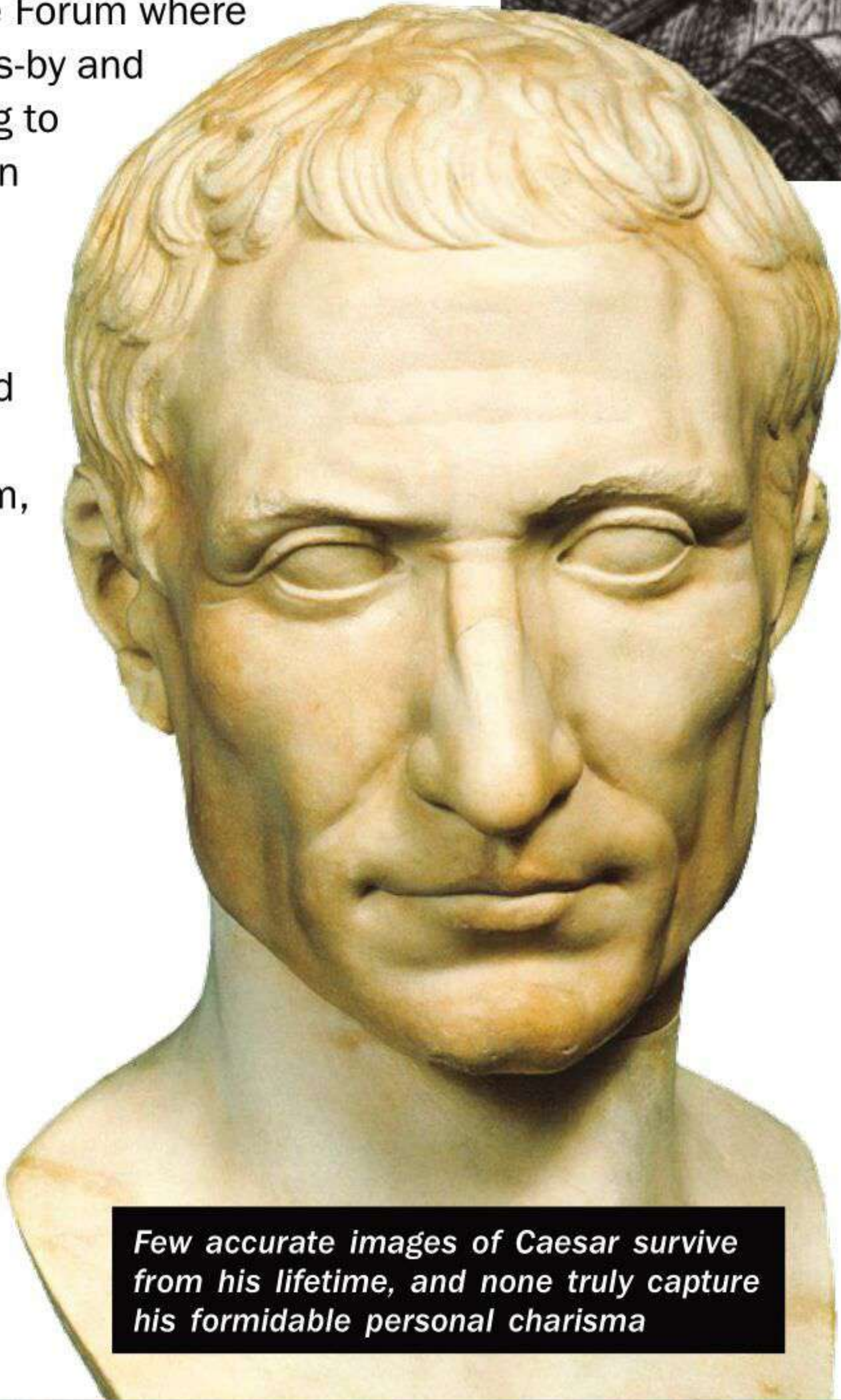
Voters tended to go with the established 'brand names' of a small number of aristocratic families, who supplied the majority of Rome's consuls. The logic was that a man whose father, uncle or brother had served the state well would prove equally capable. Success bred success, for high office brought wealth and made it easier to advertise a family's achievements. It also gave them the chance to put plenty of people in their debt for past favours, which could be called in at any time. Although not as pronounced, the draw of names like Kennedy in American politics is an echo of this.

Caesar came from outside this inner circle. Although his family claimed an ancient lineage, including descent from the goddess Venus, it had been centuries since they had been at the forefront of Roman politics. Caesar was forced to make a name for himself, because few voters

would automatically choose someone with such an unfamiliar name. In his early 20s he underwent a short period of service with the Roman Army and won the corona civica, Rome's highest military decoration traditionally given for saving the life of a fellow citizen.

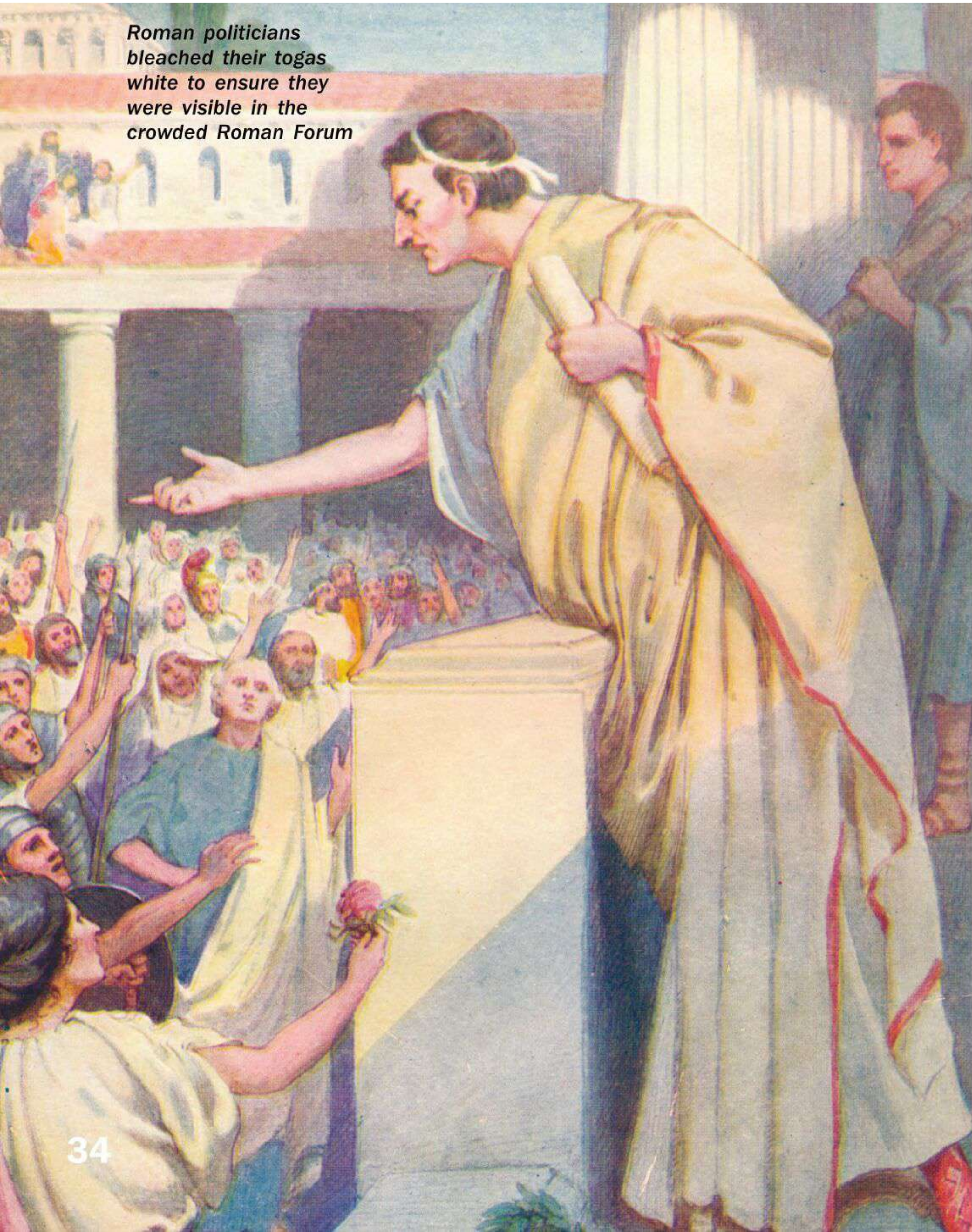
At the same time, however, rumours claimed that he had been seduced by the elderly king of Bithynia. Discrete homosexual activity in itself was no big deal among Rome's elite, but playing the shameful, passive role – especially with some debauched Greek monarch – was demeaning. This juicy piece of gossip dogged Caesar throughout his life. That said, they say there's no such thing as bad publicity and notoriety at least meant that his name was becoming known. He was starting to stand out from all the other young men seeking a career in public life.

Back in Rome, Caesar appeared as a legal advocate in a number of prominent trials, all held on raised platforms in the Forum where they were open to passers-by and potential voters. Returning to the eastern Mediterranean to perfect his oratory, he was abducted by pirates and ransomed, only to return with a hastily raised fleet. He found his former captors and crucified them, just as he had promised them he would.

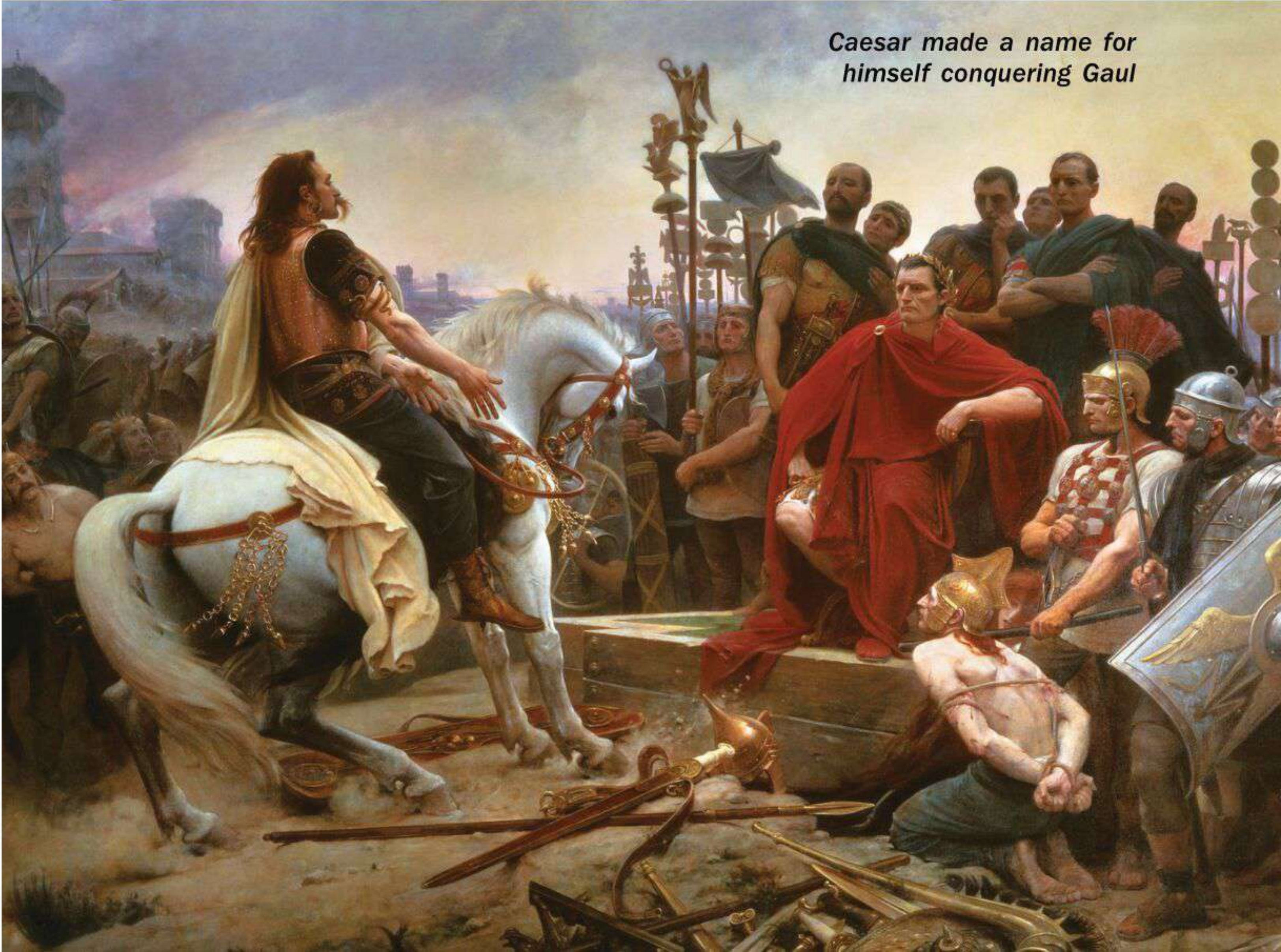


“NO ONE COULD ERADICATE THE MEMORY OF CIVIL WAR – OF SEVERED HEADS STUCK ON SPIKES”

Few accurate images of Caesar survive from his lifetime, and none truly capture his formidable personal charisma



Roman politicians bleached their togas white to ensure they were visible in the crowded Roman Forum

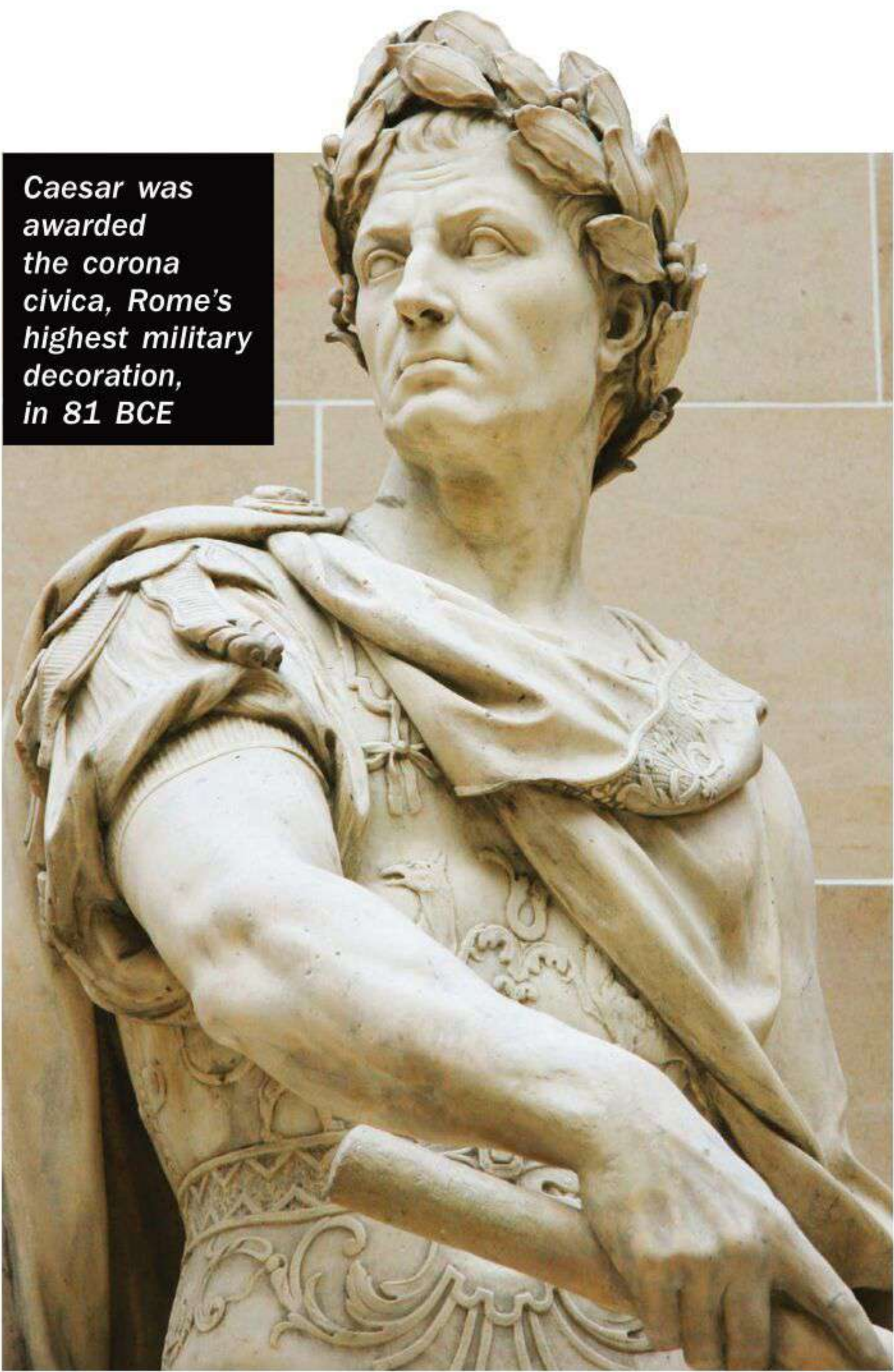


Caesar made a name for himself conquering Gaul



Sulla's seizing of control permanently destabilised the Roman power structure, making Caesar's rise possible

Caesar was awarded the corona civica, Rome's highest military decoration, in 81 BCE



CAESAR'S PATH TO THE TOP

Assuming absolute power over Rome involves a rigid career plan

Quaestor 69 BCE
In 69 BCE, Caesar was elected quaestor for Baetica (now Andalucía). The position was similar to that of a magistrate, combined with an accountant as he oversaw the finances of the region and conducted investigations where necessary. This role may have inspired his vision of a smoother-running empire and his later innovations to Roman infrastructure.

Aedile 65 BCE
An aedile organised games and looked after Rome's public buildings and markets. Caesar used this position to win public favour by staging immense gladiatorial games with over 640 gladiators. The Senate was wary of the furore of the event and set a limit on how many gladiators one man could keep, but the message was clear: Caesar knew what the common people were after.

Praetor 62 BCE
The praetor position combined the duties of an aedile and a quaestor. They were senior magistrates appointed to oversee civil matters, while others had specific courts to head up. In the absence of a consul, the praetor took power. Just one step before consulship, at this point Caesar's opponents were beginning to grow anxious as he showed no signs of slowing down.

Consul 59 BCE
The consulship was a presidential post shared by two men that had been established after the Romans abolished the monarchy. It came with a lot of power too as the consul had control of the Republic's finances, the military and the justice system. Although a consul was supposed to listen to the Senate's advice, they could not be tried until their term of office was over.

Governor 58 BCE
A governor, or proconsul, was a regional position that had many of the same duties as a consul. Lucrative and powerful, it was the traditional posting following a consulship, and a proconsul could not face prosecution until his term had finished. As governor of Gaul, Caesar added modern-day France and Belgium to Rome's expanding territory and even went on expeditions to Britain.

Dictator for life 44 BCE
'Dictator' was the title given to a magistrate who was temporarily entrusted with the full authority of the state to deal with a military emergency. Caesar had held this position before but in February 44 BCE, he became a dictator perpetuo, or dictator for life. This removed the time limit on his dictatorship - not that it mattered in the end.

Divus Iulius 42 BCE
Caesar was the first Roman to be officially declared a god. He was posthumously granted the title of 'Divus Iulius', or 'Divine Julius', by decree of the Roman Senate in 42 BCE. Mark Antony became the priest of this imperial cult, while Caesar's nephew Octavian - the future Emperor Augustus - anointed himself 'Divi Filius' ('son of a god').



MARY BEARD ON CAESAR

The Civilisations star considers the Roman ruler's political legacy

Which military campaign do you think was Caesar's most important?

Without a doubt, that has to be the conquest of Gaul – though it was also his bloodiest campaign. Even some Romans, who were much less concerned about military atrocities than we are today, thought it was genocidal and they even threatened to put him on trial for war crimes. But ghastly as it was, it really did change the face of Europe, pushing Roman rule right up to the English Channel and making northern France – what the Romans called 'hairy Gaul' – part of the same world as Spain and Italy, and influencing its history from language to systems of communication ever since.

Was Caesar's ruling style similar to the way that he managed his armies?

He always seemed to have the common touch and he had a good sense of how to win over the ordinary soldier or person. It may have been a very contrived and cynical approach. We simply do not know. But there is no doubt that much of the legislation he introduced was of real benefit to the poor such as a range of new towns to house the urban poor and he could be spectacularly generous. He was certainly immensely popular with his troops and with the ordinary Romans, who were devastated by his assassination in 44 BCE.

How did Caesar raise the money to propel himself up the political ladder?

"HE WAS CERTAINLY IMMENSELY POPULAR WITH HIS TROOPS AND THE ORDINARY ROMANS"

He started out from a landed, wealthy family, though they weren't among the super-rich at the time. Getting to the top in Rome was a very expensive business and so Caesar supplemented his family assets by borrowing, as there was a big credit economy in the ancient world, and increasingly by conquest. Individual Romans benefitted financially from their victories – that is, from the loot in every form, from works of art to bullion and slaves that came with them. There was a real sense in which the empire was a cash cow.

How did he overpower the other two First Triumvirate members, Crassus and Pompey?

They partly overpowered themselves. Crassus died in a disastrous military expedition in 53

BCE where he was defeated by the Parthians at the Battle of Carrhae on what is now the border of Turkey and Syria. The gruesome story was that his head was cut off and used as a prop in a showing of Euripides' Bacchae at the Parthian court. It stood in for the severed head of the character Pentheus.

Caesar's rivalry with Pompey is a little more complicated. In many ways, at least to start with, Pompey was the popular, charismatic leader with an eye on autocratic rule. He was nicknamed 'the Great' after Alexander the Great but he was outmanoeuvred and eventually sidelined by Caesar, which pushed him into the arms of the traditional conservatives.



Why was Caesar so beloved by the people but hated by other politicians?

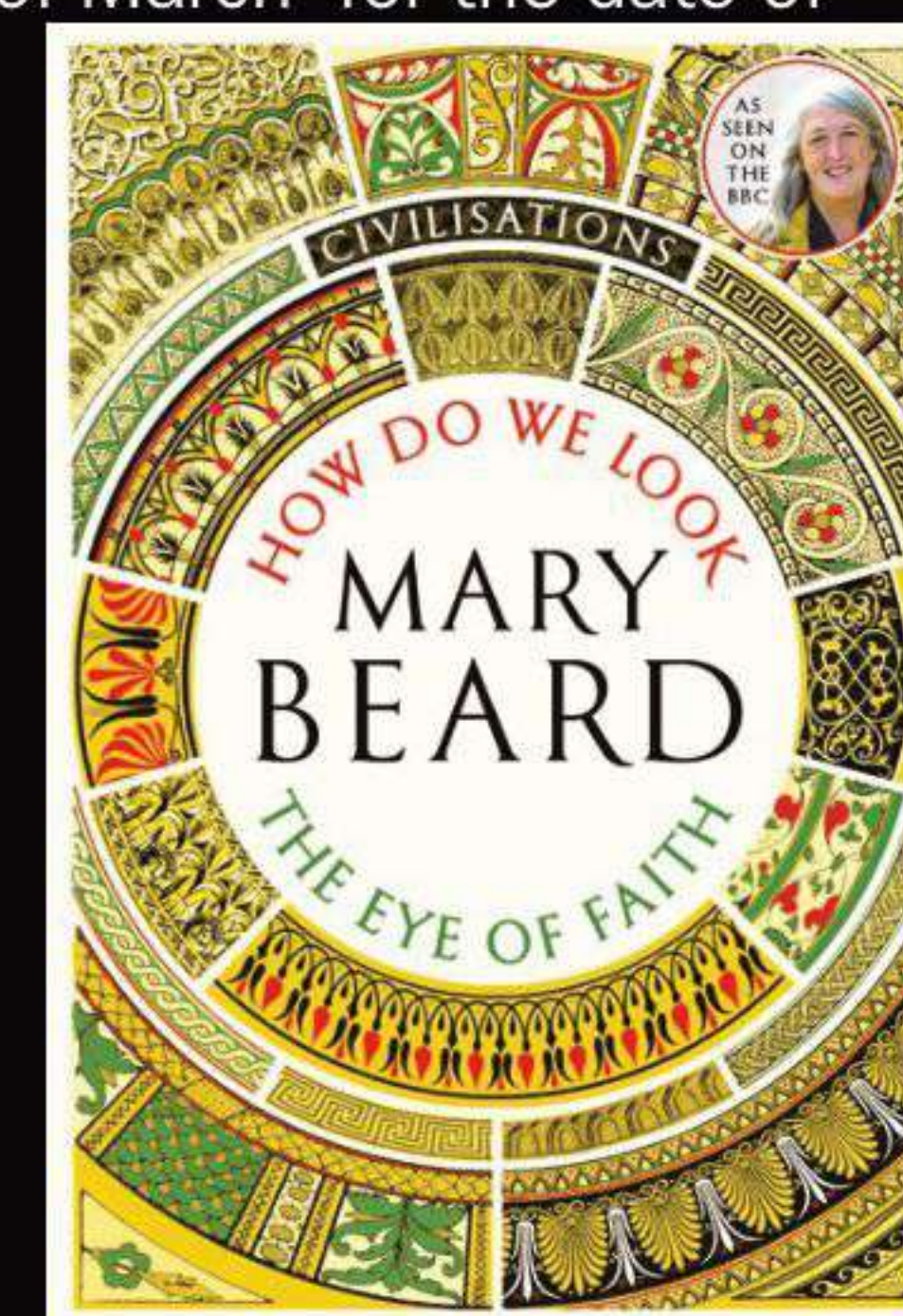
The simple way of explaining that is basic class conflict. Caesar was backing the interests of the ordinary Romans against the traditional Roman metropolitan elite. Their vested interests lay in preserving the so-called democracy, which they dominated with their wealth and influence. Roman politics were built on a principle of power-sharing among the elite – not the poor – and on a detestation of one man rule, which was considered far too reminiscent of the hated early kings of Rome. From their point of view, Caesar was becoming a king... and from their point of view, they were right.

Is there anyone in the modern era who you think best embodies Caesar and his values?

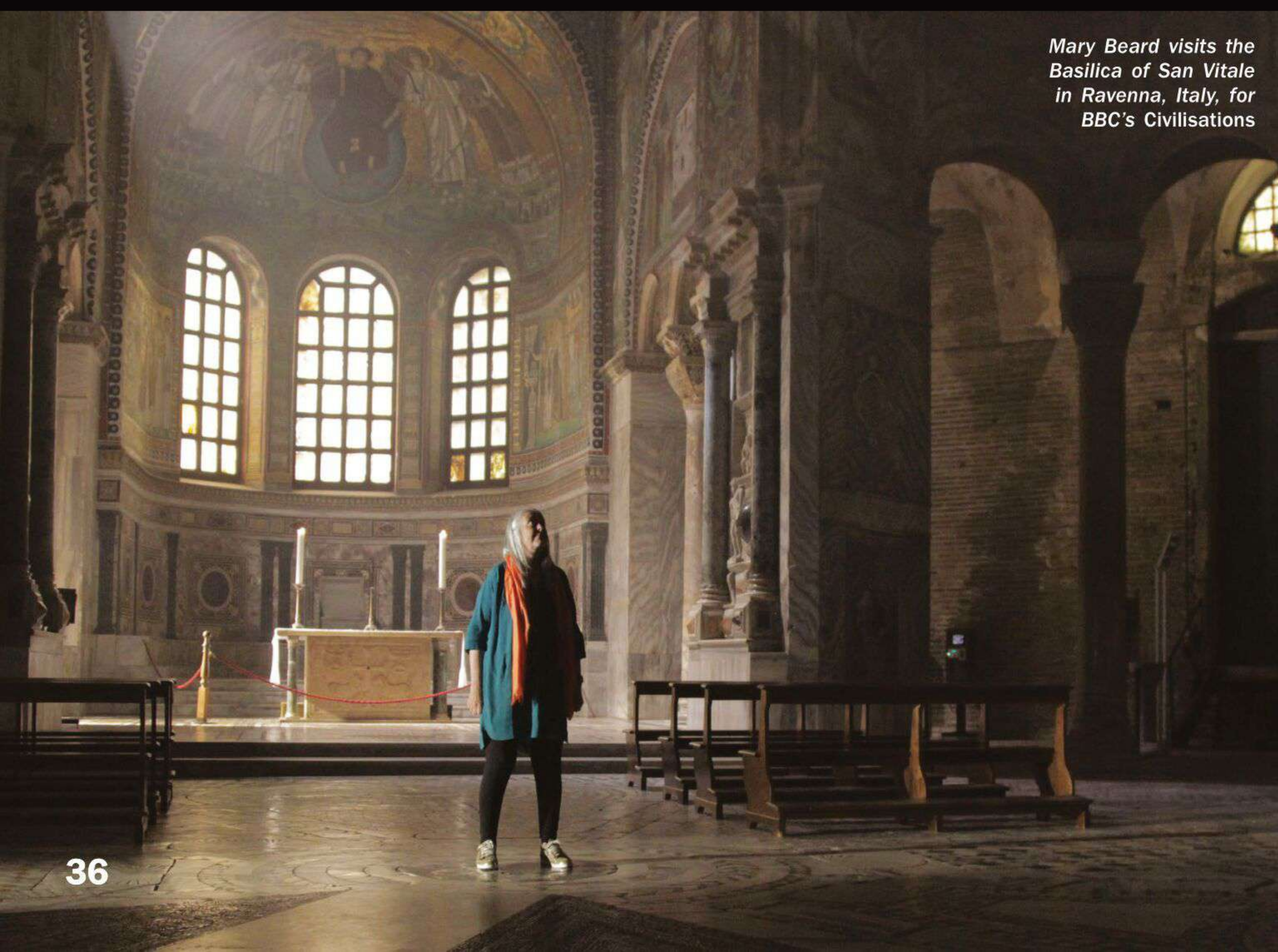
No, but you can see echoes of Caesar and his tactics in many modern politicians. That goes from Caesar's mastery of the sound bite (no one has ever done better than 'veni, vidi, vici') to his mastery of the comb-over (President Trump probably doesn't know but his particular form of hair styling goes right back to Caesar, who was embarrassed that he was thinning on top).

And, of course, the Caesar's assassination has provided the template for political murders ever since. President Lincoln's killers used the code phrase 'The Ides of March' for the date of their own planned assassination.

Mary Beard is professor of Classics at Cambridge University. She presents Civilisations on BBC2 and has written a tie-in book, *Civilisations: How Do We Look & The Eye of Faith*.



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Mary Beard visits the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, for BBC's Civilisations

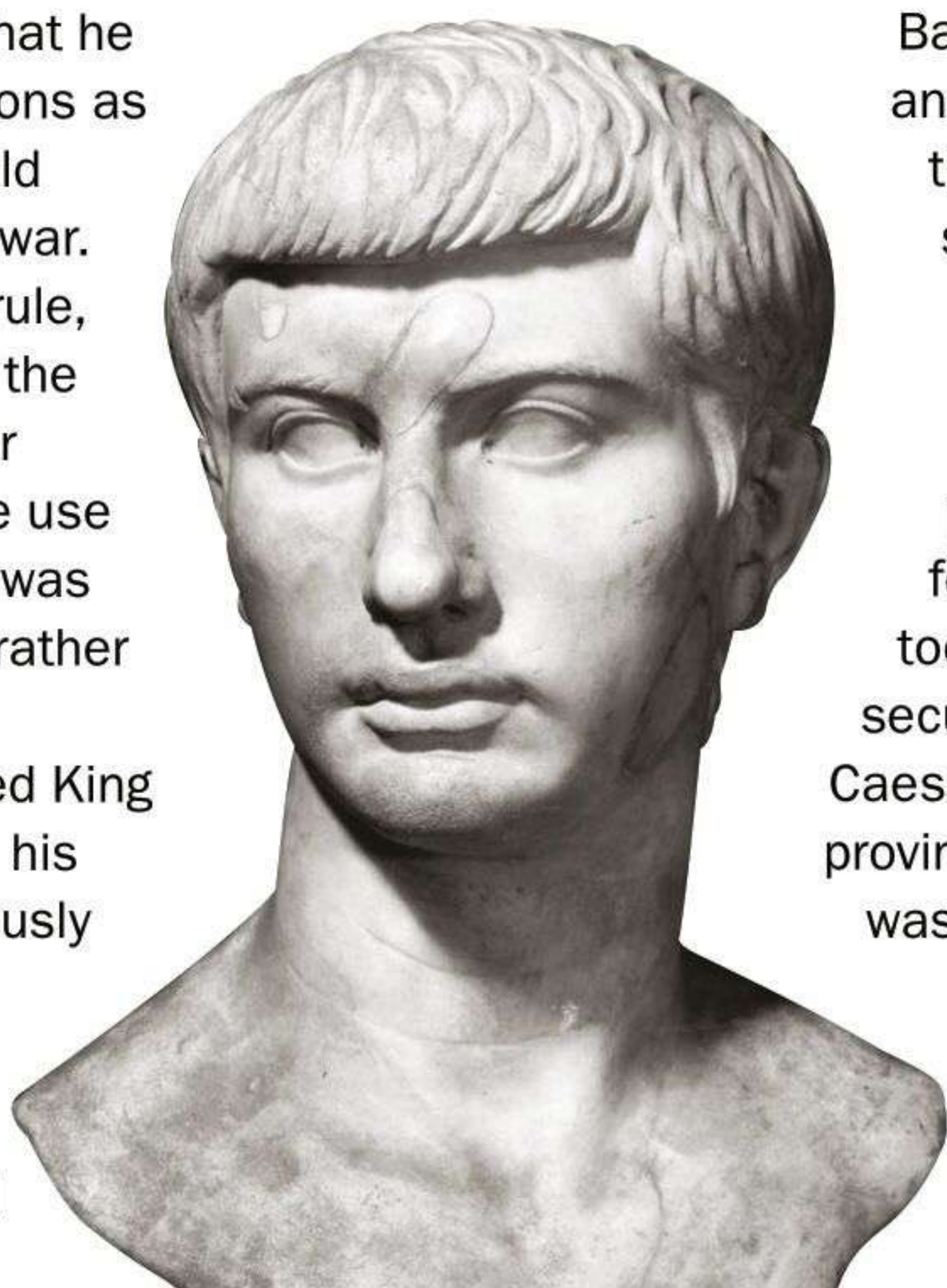
As a mark of his leniency, their throats were cut so that they did not suffer lingering deaths. The story spread, no doubt modestly told by Caesar himself – the only significant witness. Another source of conversation was Caesar’s succession of affairs with the wives of other senators, which naturally made him many enemies.

At 30, a man was able to seek public office and it was a mark of pride for an aristocrat to win each post as soon as he was eligible. Caesar did this, partly because he was good at being noticed and also because he possessed exceptional charm and charisma, which allowed him to seduce a crowd as readily as another man’s wife. He also borrowed money on a staggering scale and spent it as favours, on public shows and as straightforward bribes to win votes. All the other candidates were doing the same, but Caesar proved better at it, spending the money shrewdly.

Soon his debts were so enormous that he had to keep on winning magistracies – only if he became consul and was given command in a profitable war was there any chance that he would actually be able to repay any his creditors. One single failure would have meant political extinction, something that happened to many. As everyone struggled to out-spend competitors, inevitably there was a constant inflation in the scale of bribes required to win an election. When Caesar sought the highly politicised post as Rome’s senior priest, or pontifex maximus, he left his house allegedly telling his mother that he would “return as a victor or not at all”.

Thankfully for his mother, Caesar finally won the coveted consulship in 59 BCE. He was primarily aided by a covert agreement with Crassus and Pompey, two of the Republic’s wealthiest men. The former was a financier and property developer who had defeated Spartacus’ army of escaped slaves and who boasted that no one could be considered rich unless he could afford to raise his own legion. Pompey, meanwhile, had inherited such vast estates that he had actually raised three legions as a private army so that he could support Sulla during the civil war. His career had broken every rule, including those reinforced by the dictator. Nonetheless, Caesar felt that it was better to make use of the ‘young butcher’, as he was nicknamed, and his soldiers rather than penalise him.

Pompey had finally defeated King Mithridates of Pontus and on his return to Rome he had graciously demobilised his army, expecting to be welcomed back as the senior statesman in the Senate and to take an honoured and important role in public life. Instead, inexperienced in day-to-day politics, he was



Marcus Junius Brutus was the son of Caesar’s long-time lover, Servilia, and was highly regarded by the dictator



A testament to Caesar’s enduring legacy, this marble relief of Caesar’s rise was made in the 18th century

marginalised by most of the senators who had no wish to be in the shadow of someone else.

The principle of preventing anyone from gaining too much long-term power had by now become an obsession for Rome’s elite. Too many senators saw political service as a chance to financially squeeze the provincial population so that they could pay off their debts and make themselves even richer. The established families wanted to make sure that there were enough opportunities available for them and their cronies, and resented a mere few men being granted major commands, even if this was the best way to deal with a problem.

Inertia took hold at the heart of the state and meant that most senators felt it was better to let a problem endure than have one of their rivals gain the credit for solving it. Unemployment among citizens stood at a staggering level, leaving hundreds of thousands dependent on the grain dole issued in Rome.

Backed up by influence, money and supporters, Caesar forced through a bill redistributing large swathes of publicly owned land as farms to war veterans during his consulship. Opposition was bitter, but it was less about the principle and more about the fear that this would make Caesar too popular with the people. Having secured what his allies wanted, Caesar gained an extraordinary provincial command position, which was eventually extended to ten years. This led to his conquest of Gaul and expeditions into Germany and to Britain, all of



Gnaeus Pompeius – known as Pompey the Great – was a renowned general

which are described in his Commentaries on the Gallic War.

It was here that he carefully demonstrated that everything he did was all for the good of Rome, and he celebrated the valour and victories of ‘nostri’ – ‘our lads’. Perhaps one million people died and as many more were sold as slaves, but the Romans didn’t view imperialism as a bad thing. Caesar was awarded more days of public thanksgiving than any general before him. Plunder allowed him to pay off his colossal debts, to buy new political friends and build huge monuments in Rome that provided jobs for impoverished citizens.

Caesar’s opponents had failed to block him during his consulship but they had muddled the

“ALL THE OTHER CANDIDATES WERE DOING THE SAME BUT CAESAR PROVED BETTER AT IT”

BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH

The final nail in the coffin for the Republic was Caesar's assassination by plotting senators, many of them some of his oldest friends

MARCUS JUNIUS BRUTUS (85-42 BCE)

Alarmed by Caesar's growing power after being appointed dictator, Brutus was persuaded to join the conspirators. Upon realising that Brutus was one of the attackers, Caesar is said to have covered his face to preserve his dignity.

GAIUS CASSIUS LONGINUS (85-42 BCE)

Said to be jealous of the favour Caesar showed to Brutus, Cassius is thought to have been the mastermind behind the assassination plot. When the time came, Cassius egged on his fellow conspirators and stabbed Caesar in the chest.

DECIMUS BRUTUS (85-43 BCE)

A distant cousin of Julius Caesar, Brutus was a general and politician whose job on the final day was to convince a sick Caesar to attend the Senate. He ensured Caesar would show up, even if it was just to postpone the meeting.

WHEN IT HAPPENED

In 44 BCE, Caesar planned a major expedition against Parthia to avenge Crassus and would be away for several years. Three days before he was due to leave, the assassins struck. It was 15 March – or the Ides, one of the three named days in each Roman month.

SERVILIUS CASCA (84-42 BCE)

Casca joined the conspirators alongside his brother, Gaius, who was a close friend of Caesar's. In fact, it was Casca who struck the first blow during the assassination, attacking Caesar from behind his chair while he was distracted.

GAIUS TREBONIUS (92-43 BCE)

Once a trusted associate of Caesar, Gaius Trebonius intercepted Mark Antony outside the senate building as he raced to warn Caesar of the plot, and engaged him in conversation. This allowed the attackers to finish the job.

TILLIUS CIMBER (85-42 BCE)

Upon his arrival at the Senate, Caesar was presented with a petition by Cimber to pardon his exiled brother. As the other senators gathered round, Cimber grabbed Caesar's clothing to distract him.

WHERE IT HAPPENED

Caesar was killed at a meeting of the Senate. The Senate House had been burned down in political rioting eight years earlier and Caesar's grand replacement was not yet finished. Purely by chance, the Senate convened in one of the temples attached to Pompey's theatre.

A *pugio* was a standard-issue military dagger that was used to kill Caesar

LEGENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

waters over the legality of his actions. During his time in Gaul, Crassus had come to dream of fresh military glory and launched an unprovoked invasion of Parthia. He was killed for his pains. Pompey and Caesar drifted apart, not least when Julia, Caesar’s daughter and Pompey’s wife, died in childbirth. Opponents realised the alliance was weak and did everything to prize the two men apart, sensing that with Pompey’s support they could end Caesar’s illustrious career.

Later, the poet Lucan claimed that Pompey could not stand an equal and Caesar could not stand a superior. He might have added that a great many leading senators were willing to run the risk of another costly civil war simply to cut Caesar down to size. However, Caesar was equally willing to plunge the world into chaos just to preserve his status and glory. Upon surveying dead senators after the Battle of Pharsalus in 48 BCE, all he had to say was, “They wanted this.”

Caesar had the better army and was still at the peak of his military performance, so he triumphed in this new civil war. Rome had a dictator once again, but Caesar surprised everyone by his ‘clemency’, sparing opponents who surrendered, notably Brutus and Cassius, both of whom even received honours and office from his new regime.

Although much of his time was spent on campaign and in the famous affair with Cleopatra,



A coin minted by Brutus to pay his soldiers in the civil war. It shows a freedman’s cap, a symbol later adopted by the French Revolutionaries

FRIENDS AND FOES

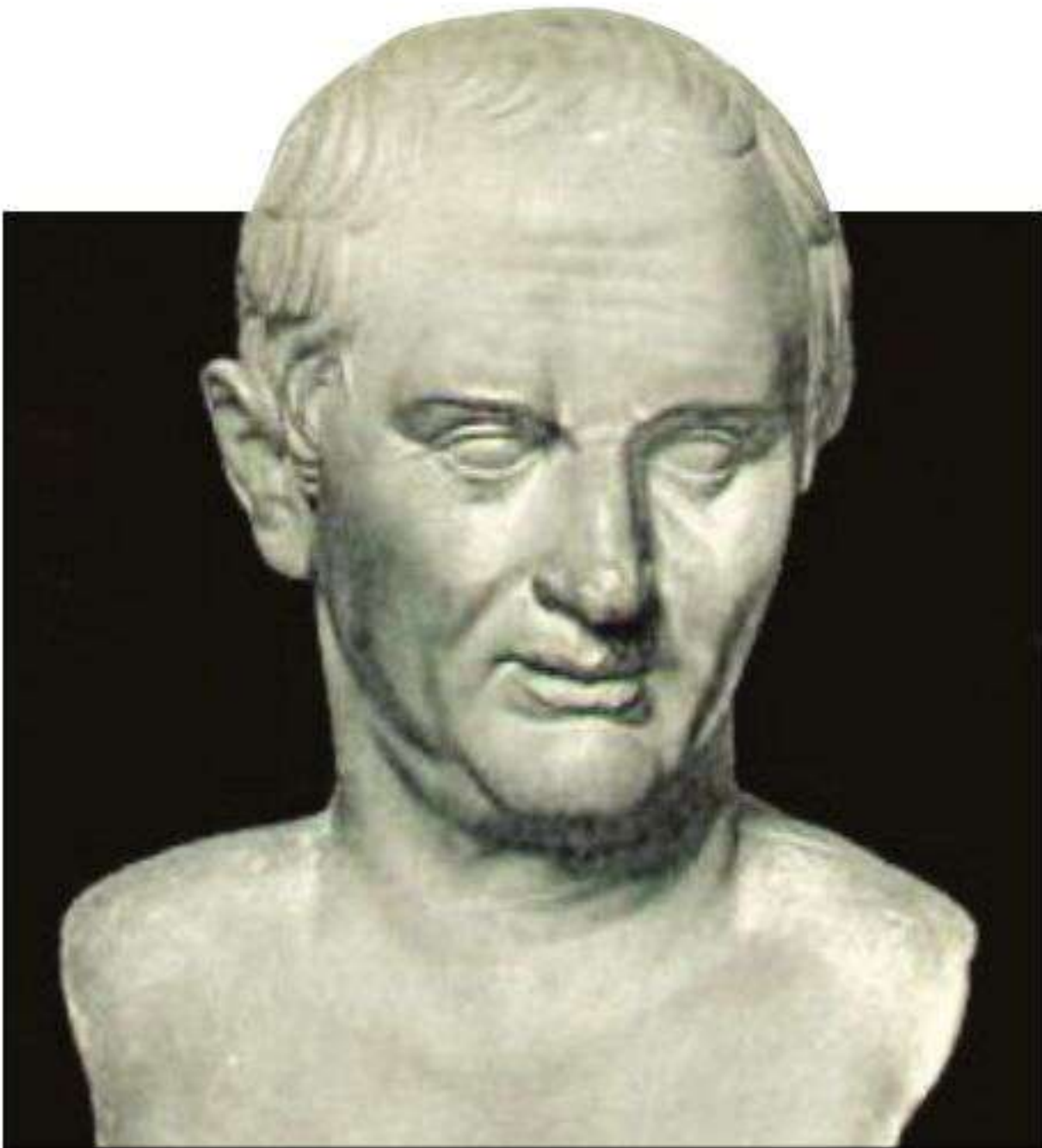
In politics, not everyone tends to get along

As you would expect, the First Triumvirate had its supporters and its enemies. Firmly on their side, though, was Cicero, a politician and orator who was strongly opposed to the optimates in the Senate. In fact, he was on such good terms with the triumvirate that he appealed to Pompey and Caesar to help him return to Rome in 57 BCE after his exile. It’s even thought that he was asked to join the triumvirate at the very beginning. He refused but that didn’t stop him from lending his legal services. His friend Lucius Lucceius also ran for the consulship with Caesar in 60 BCE and financed both of them, even though he was ultimately unsuccessful.

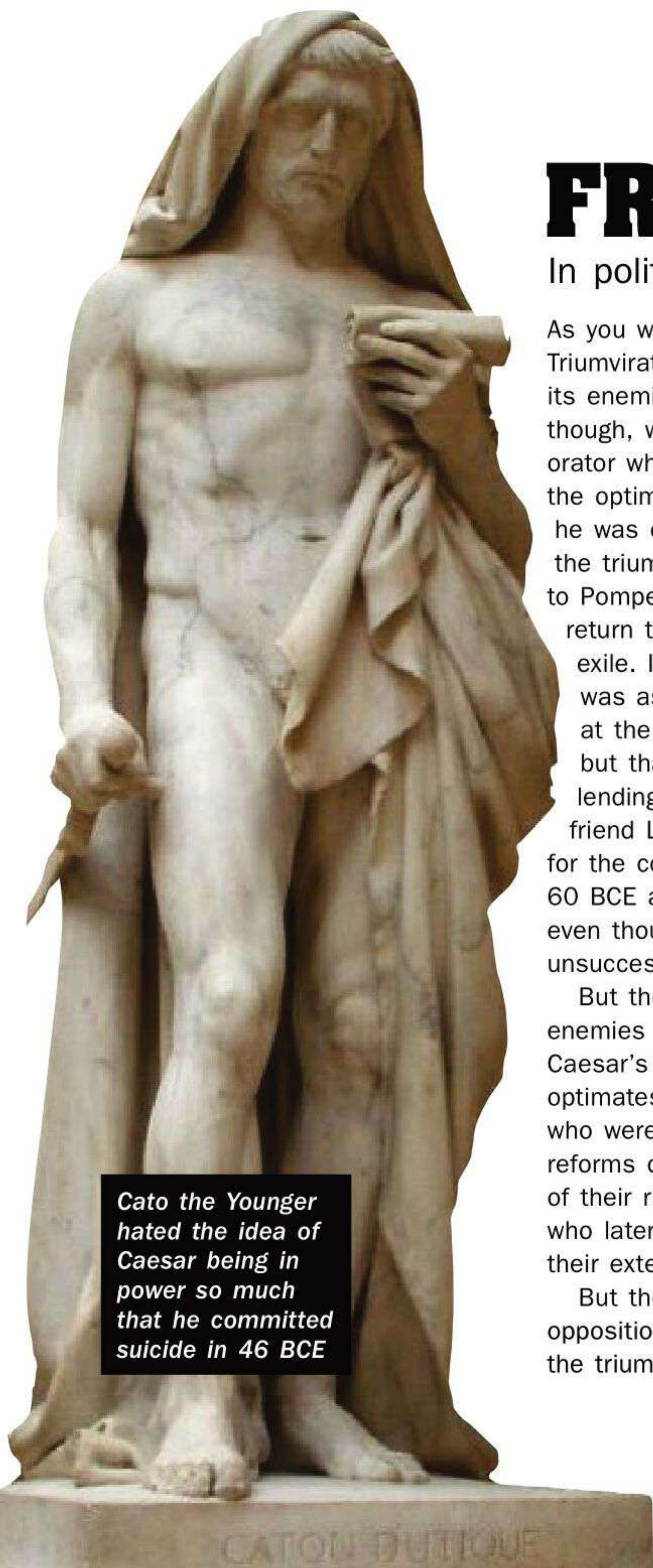
But the trio perhaps had more enemies than friends. Bibulus, Caesar’s co-consul, was part of the optimates faction, the conservatives who were eager to block the radical reforms of the populares. Another of their rivals was Cato the Younger, who later attacked the triumvirate for their extended governorships.

But there was one man whose opposition to the three men led to the triumvirate’s birth in the first

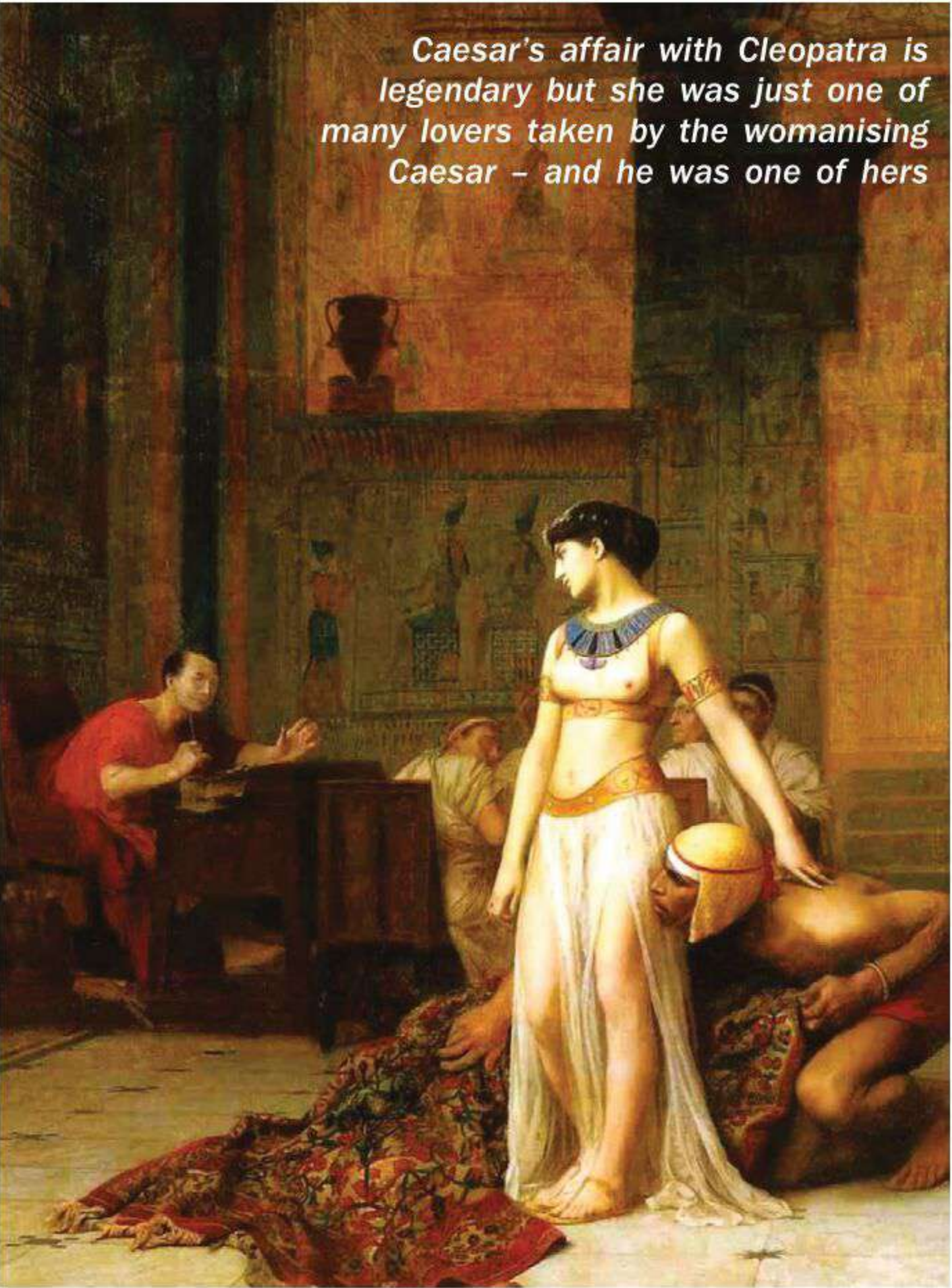
place. Lucius Licinius Lucullus, a member of the optimates, was forcibly removed from his post in the east when his invasion of Armenia nearly brought the dreaded Parthians into the conflict. Pompey was brought in to take his place and the glory. And when consul Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer voted against Pompey’s veteran settlements, Pompey had no reason not to join forces with Caesar and Crassus.



Cicero, the orator who declined to join the triumvirate but had to appeal to them to return to Rome after exile



Cato the Younger hated the idea of Caesar being in power so much that he committed suicide in 46 BCE



Caesar’s affair with Cleopatra is legendary but she was just one of many lovers taken by the womanising Caesar – and he was one of hers



Caesar's forces defeated Pompey's at the Battle of Pharsalus in 48 BCE

his visits to Rome saw intensive bursts of wide-ranging reform, making the state begin to function once again. Most of these reforms were sensible, although in many cases there was not enough time for them to start to work. This was scarcely a brutal tyranny but for too many senators it was simply not how the state should work. One man, however capable and well intentioned, should never hold so much power and receive honours on a scale dwarfing those of anyone else.

Seeing they had no other option than to assassinate Caesar, Brutus, Cassius and several dozen other senators stabbed him to death on the 15 March 44 BCE, a day that was known as the Ides of March in the Roman calendar. They were surprised when the public didn't share their enthusiasm for the liberty they proclaimed upon Caesar's death – which ultimately was freedom for the elite to share out the high offices and profit among themselves.

Civil war soon resumed and was eventually won by Caesar's great nephew and heir, who became Caesar Augustus, Rome's first emperor. After the chaos and bloodshed, everyone was simply glad to have stability, whatever the political cost. The Republic was dead.

“CAESAR WAS AWARDED MORE DAYS OF THANKSGIVING THAN ANY GENERAL”



CROSSING THE RUBICON

A small stream restarted a civil war

It's amazing how one narrow river could cause such a huge problem for Rome. The Rubicon separated Cisalpine Gaul from Italy and anyone crossing it with soldiers was breaking the Lex Cornelia Majestatis, a law forbidding generals to enter the Italian peninsula with an army. Caesar knew this, but that wasn't going to stop him.

There was already a considerable amount of tension between Caesar and Rome's other officials. He was popular with the people and the Senate had demanded that he hand ten of his legions over to a new governor. In retaliation, he chose to rebel.

On 10 or 11 January 49 BCE, he crossed the Apennines and then came an act of war – but not without some deliberation. As Caesar and his accompanying legion neared the Rubicon, he slowed until he ordered a halt. He took his time considering the outcome of what he was intending to go, constantly switching between being ready for war and wondering if it was really the right course of action.

As he crossed the river, now called Il Rubicone, in northern Italy, he threw caution to the wind and supposedly announced, “Alea iacta est”, or “the die is cast”, a line from Arrhephoros by Greek dramatist Menander. Once the deed was done, there was no going back. He headed south at full speed.





SALADIN

Battle-hardened after two decades of warfare in the Near East, the Kurdish-born Ayyubid sultan led a mighty army to total victory against the Franks in 1187



On the south knoll of the Horns of Hattin, the Crusader king reformed his surviving knights for a final charge. The smell and sounds of defeat filled the air. Arrows that blackened the sky rained down from Muslim archers, the wails of wounded and dying pierced the air, and Christian foot soldiers tried desperately to keep the Muslims at bay.

The Crusaders swept down from the high ground. Their objective was Saladin's yellow banner, protected by hundreds of heavily armed soldiers. The Latin knights crashed into the tightly packed Muslim ranks, which formed a protective barrier around the Ayyubid sultan. Lances shattered on impact, and the knights fought on with swords and axes. They swung and slashed as they fought their way towards the sultan's position. If his banner fell, they might still win the day. It was 4 July 1187. The final phase of the Battle of Hattin was under way.

Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, known to the Franks as Saladin, was 49 years old by the time of the titanic clash in northern Palestine. His rise to power had begun in 1164 when Nur ad-Din, the Zengid Turkish ruler of Syria, sent the young officer on a military expedition with his uncle, Kurdish warlord Shirkuh, to Fatimid

Egypt. Shirkuh's objective was to prevent the weak Shiite caliphate in Cairo from falling to the Franks. Over the course of the next five years, Shirkuh and Saladin conducted three separate expeditions to Egypt. During the last expedition in January 1169, Shirkuh became the Fatimid caliph al-Adid's vizier, or chief minister.

Opportunities always seemed to present themselves to Saladin, but often a sixth sense was required to know how to navigate treacherous palace politics where anyone might be assassinated by the henchmen of an even more clever foe. When Shirkuh died two months after becoming vizier, Saladin succeeded his uncle in the key post. This gave him a power base, and he moved rapidly to bring the rest of his family to Egypt and hand out fiefs to them.

Saladin continued climbing the rungs of the Islamic leadership ladder. When al-Adid passed away in late summer 1171, Saladin, with ad-Din's blessing, became caliph of Egypt. Ad-Din approved of Saladin's ascension to the high post because it would enable Saladin to replace Egypt's Fatimid Shiite government with a Sunni administration. Perhaps the greatest opportunity of Saladin's life unfolded three years later when ad-Din died. Although ad-Din's 11-year-old son succeeded him, Saladin successfully extended his power into Syria.

But eradicating rival Zengid princes in Syria proved a protracted matter for Saladin. Over the course of the next two decades, he walked a tightrope balancing offensives against the Latin Crusader States with those against rival Zengid princes. Although Saladin secured Damascus without bloodshed in 1174, it would be nearly another decade until he could capture Aleppo in 1183. By then he had extended his control over most of Syria, as well as most of Jazira to the east, forging in the process an impressive Ayyubid Empire, which bore his family surname.

The rulers of the rival Seljuk and Ayyubid empires were in constant competition, and both reported to the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. Throughout the long years campaigning against the rival Zengid Dynasty, Saladin had to justify to the Abbasid caliph why he saw it necessary to take up the sword against fellow Muslims instead of Christian infidels. Saladin told the caliph that he would not be strong enough to defeat the Franks until he had amassed greater power.

Saladin invaded the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the largest of three Crusader States, in the autumn of 1183. Guy of Lusignan, regent of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, was determined to fight a defensive battle, and Saladin did not find favourable circumstances

LEGENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD



to attack, so he withdrew. In winter 1186-87, an incident occurred that gave Saladin good cause to re-invade the Latin kingdom. Lord Raynald of Châtillon, a sworn enemy of Saladin, pillaged a Muslim caravan travelling from Cairo to Damascus through his realm.

Saladin had entered into a two-year truce with Raynald in 1186 in which the Frankish baron had agreed to allow caravans to pass unmolested from Egypt to Syria. But Raynald had confiscated the riches and imprisoned the travellers. Saladin requested multiple times that Raynald release the prisoners and their possessions. "The Count persistently refused to comply," wrote contemporary Arab historian Ibn al-Athir. "Saladin vowed if he ever laid hands on him, he would kill him."

In spring 1187, Saladin began assembling a large army in southern Syria. His generals, each of who would command the equivalent of a modern corps in the upcoming campaign, were his nephew Al-Muzaffar Taqi al-Din, who would lead the right wing, and Kurdish-born Muzaffar ad-Din Gokbori, who would lead the left wing. Saladin would command the centre.

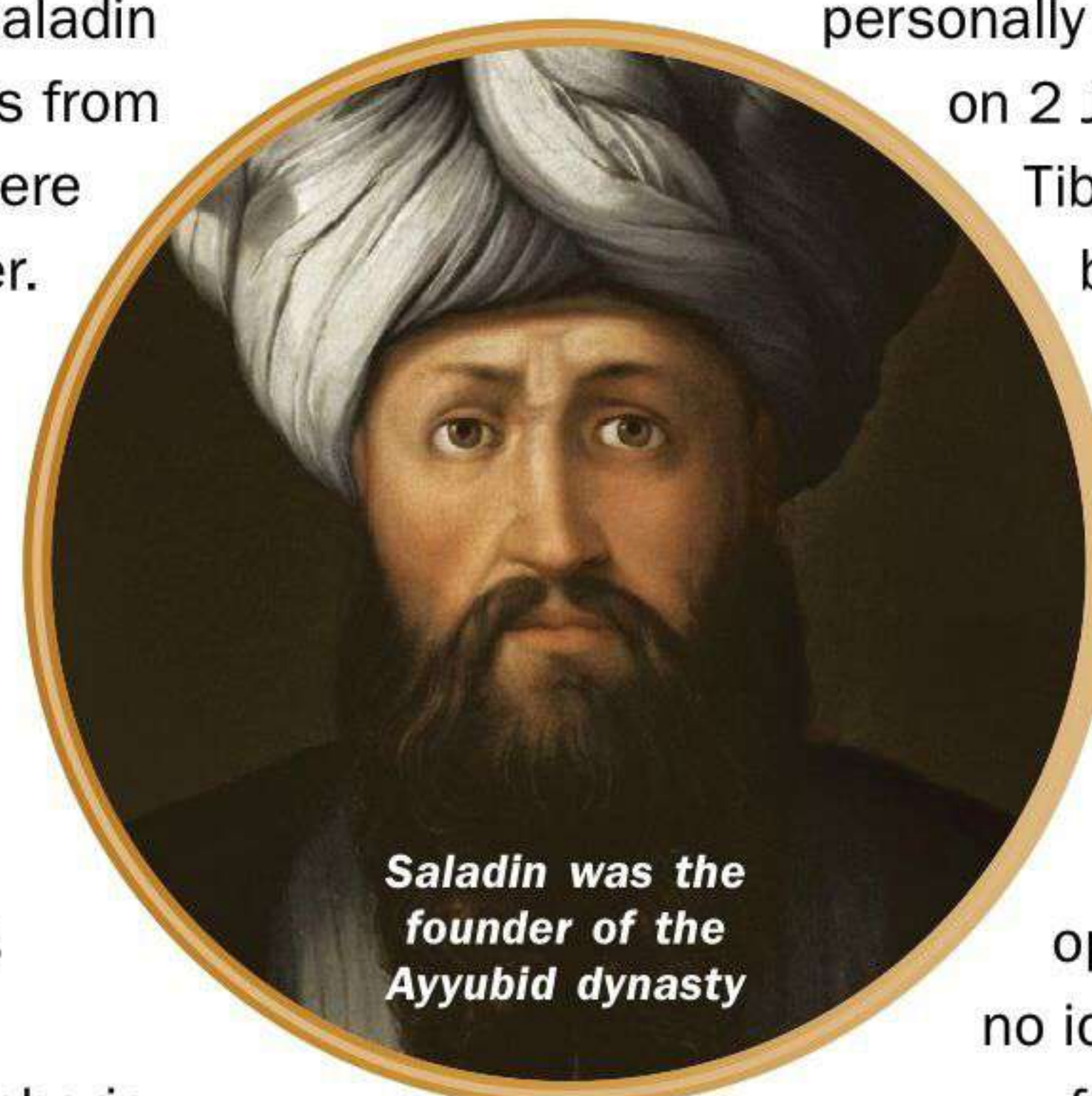
Saladin had approximately 30,000 men, half of which were veteran cavalry. The ground where the battle would unfold consisted of rolling hills with expansive plateaus blanketed with grass and bristling with rocky outcroppings. Water could be found in varying amounts at different springs. Saladin intended to block the Crusaders from reaching the Sea of Galilee, where they would have abundant water. He also intended to isolate them, if possible, away from a desert spring.

Saladin led his army across the Jordan River during the last week in June. The Ayyubids encamped at Kafr Sabt, which was ten kilometres south west of Tiberias. The Crusader army mustered at Sephorie, 24 kilometres from Tiberias. King Guy of Jerusalem commanded 20,000 men, of which 15,000 were infantry, 3,800 were auxiliary cavalry, and 1,200 were mounted knights. The horses were not armoured, and therefore

vulnerable to arrows. Prince Raymond III of Tripoli commanded the vanguard, Guy the main guard, and Count Balian of Ibelin led the rearguard, which included the elite Hospitallers and Templars.

To lure the Crusaders into battle, Saladin personally led a detachment on 2 June to besiege Tiberias. Guy took the bait without gathering reconnaissance on the size or location of the enemy forces. The distance to Tiberias would be too much to cover in one day should they run into serious opposition, but Guy had no idea where they would camp after the first day's march.

The Crusaders left camp at dawn and set off for the spring of Turan, where limited water was available. On the march, foot soldiers in each of the three corps formed a protective square around the mounted



Ayyubid Warriors

The Muslim Ayyubids blended Turkic, Persian, and Egyptian influences, and in many respects their warriors were a mirror image of their Latin Crusader foes

WHITE SHAWL

The white shawl served a practical purpose of furnishing protection from the sun, as well as from blowing sand.

YELLOW CAP

Yellow was the royal colour of the Ayyubids, and Saladin's wardrobe consisted of items crafted with yellow silk and finished with gold embroidery.

MAIL COIF

The sultan wore a mail coif, which saved his life in May 1175 when an assassin tried to stab him in the neck.

KAZAGHAND

The kazaghand looked like an ordinary jacket, but it was actually a light coat of armour with mail sandwiched between layers of fabric.

HELMET

A silver-plated turban-style helmet was an essential piece of armoured equipment for an Ayyubid cavalryman riding to war.

BOW

Although his primary weapons of choice were a lance and sword for close-quarters combat, the cavalryman was also equipped with a composite bow made from layers of horn and sinew.

CUIRRASS

The Ayyubids favoured flexible armour, and heavy cavalrymen wore an iron lamellar cuirass over a mail hauberk for protection from arrows and edged weapons.

BARD

The horse's bard was made of double felt and designed to offer a layer of protection against enemy arrows.

SWORD

The sultan's straight sword, which had a gold pommel and guard, featured silver inlay on its blade made possible by 'Damascening', a process for which the city of Damascus became renowned.

SWORD

The Turkish-style sabre was housed in an elaborately decorated sheath crafted from Damascene steel.



knights and sergeants. The Crusaders reached Turan at midday and some troops and horses received water. They had only covered ten kilometres. Guy decided to press on for the village of Hattin, which was situated about eight kilometres to the north east, where ample water was stored.

The Muslims soon appeared in large numbers on both flanks of the Latin army. Saladin's strategy, for the most part, was the same as that practiced by the Mongols and Asian steppe warriors. He would encircle the enemy and weaken it with heavy fire from his archers. If the Crusaders charged the archers, they would scatter to avoid contact.

Mounted skirmishers armed with compound bows maintained steady pressure on the Crusader vanguard throughout the first day. The result was that by midday, the Crusader advance slowed to a crawl. Guy sent a messenger to get Raymond's advice. He suggested they camp for the night.

The Crusaders were at a junction called Maskana, which had no water. Nevertheless, Guy took Raymond's advice. He may have hoped the Muslims would attack, in which case the Franks would have an advantage on the defensive. But Saladin had no such intentions.

The Christians, most of who were severely dehydrated, slept on their arms.

"The Muslims for their part had lost their first fear of the enemy and were in high spirits, and spent the night inciting one another to battle," wrote al-Athir. "They could smell victory in the air."

The Crusaders renewed their advance at dawn. Muslim archers fired a steady stream of arrows into their ranks. In addition, the Muslim skirmishers repeatedly attacked Raymond's vanguard.

The Latin infantry, which lacked the knights' esprit de corps, became despondent. The foot soldiers began to break formation, which left the knights unprotected. The infantry wandered toward the north of the two hills that formed the Horns of Hattin. Guy begged them to stay in column, but they could not be rallied. The Crusaders' only hope lay in reaching the village of Hattin. But the village was in Muslim hands, and Saladin's troops had no intention of allowing the Christians to reach it.

With the situation growing increasingly desperate by mid-morning, Raymond assembled his knights for a headlong charge against Taqi al-Din's troops. The charge was successful and Raymond, Balian, and about

a dozen knights escaped. Guy was left with his household knights and those from the two military orders.

In a last-ditch effort to rally his troops, Guy instructed his squires to put up his red tent on the lower slope of the south horn. By that time, Muslim infantry was attacking the Crusader foot atop the Horns of Hattin. At mid-afternoon, Guy believed that his only hope lay in charging towards Saladin's position. He led two headlong charges, but Saladin's Mamluk bodyguards drove them back with heavy losses each time.

Guy and his knights took up a defensive position on the southern horn with some of the infantry. Saladin ordered an assault against the horns. Heavy cavalry armed with lances overran the Crusader position; in the process, they captured the morale-boosting relic known as the True Cross. With its loss went any last shred of morale, and Guy ordered his men to cast away their weapons and lie flat on the rocky ground, placing themselves at Saladin's mercy.

The Franks were rounded up and paraded before Saladin. Approximately 200 Knights Templar were summarily executed. Saladin agreed to ransom Guy and the other nobles.

THE BATTLE OF HATTIN 3-4 JULY 1187

Saladin attacked the town of Tiberius to lure the Crusaders into a trap in which his cavalry would encircle and annihilate them. King Guy of Jerusalem took the bait

02 DYING OF THIRST

On 3 July, Saladin orders his light cavalry to get behind the Crusaders as they march west. The Muslims fill in the wells the Franks had passed so the enemy would not be able to get water whether advancing or retreating.

03 BURN, BABY, BURN

The Muslims light brush fires beside the Crusaders' route, which increases their thirst and causes them great discomfort.

05 EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

The survivors of the Crusader vanguard ride north to safety at Safed Castle.

06 TRUE CROSS DEFILED

The bishop of Acre had carried into battle the jewel-encrusted relic of the cross upon which Christ died. He is slain in the battle, and al-Din's soldiers bring the cross to him. After the battle the cross is carried upside down on a lance back to Damascus.

04 MORALE PLUMMETS

The brush fires take a heavy toll on the Crusader infantry, who quickly become despondent. They wander onto the north horn, where the rubble of a Bronze Age fort offers some protection.

01 ENEMY AT THE GATES

Saladin leads a detachment that successfully storms the town on 2 July, forcing the Latin garrison to retreat to the citadel. Among those trapped inside is Lady Eschiva, the wife of Count Raymond of Tripoli.

5 Key Battles

Saladin had a chequered record fighting the Crusaders before his great victory at Hattin. His strategy varied between sieges, raids, and pitched battles

● Battle of Montgisard

During his first major raid into the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the autumn of 1171, Saladin underestimates the ability of King Baldwin IV to contest his advance. The Franks ambush the Ayyubids, inflicting a stinging defeat on them. Saladin himself is nearly captured and is said to have raced for the safety of Egypt on the back of a camel.

25 November 1177

● Battle of Jacob's Ford

In late summer 1179, Saladin attacks the uncompleted Crusader fortress of Chastellet at Jacob's Ford on the Upper Jordan River. Despite a tenacious defence by the Knights Templar garrison, a swift siege in which professional sappers collapse a section of the wall enables the Muslims to slay the garrison.

30 August 1179

● Standoff at Ayn Jalut

Intent on provoking a decisive clash with the Franks, Saladin crosses the Jordan River into Galilee. Guy of Lusignan, the regent for terminally ill King Baldwin IV, leads an army to intercept him. Saladin tries to lure the Franks into making a tactical error, but Guy entrenches and Saladin withdraws.

29 September – 8 October 1183

● Battle of Cresson

Saladin's son, Al-Afdal ibn Salah ad-Din, leads a large force into Galilee to assess Crusader strength. A passing party of Knights Templar and Hospitaller rides to intercept him. Templar Master Gerard of Ridefort impetuously orders an attack against the larger force. Al-Afdal destroys the Crusader force. Ridefort escapes, but Hospitaller Master Roger de Moulins is slain.

1 May 1187

● Siege of Kerak

After failing to bring about a decisive battle in Galilee, Saladin leads his army south to besiege Kerak Castle, which still holds a Christian garrison. Saladin's army is unable to successfully bridge the castle's moat.

October–December 1187

After killing Raynald, Saladin told Guy: "It is not the wont of kings, to kill kings; but that man had transgressed all bounds, and therefore did I treat him thus"

Pharaoh's Island, just off the shore of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and on the route between Cairo and Damascus, changed from Crusader to Muslim hands in 1170



THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM 20 September – 2 October 1187

After finally defeating the Crusaders on the battlefield, Saladin seized his chance to take back the Holy City

05 WALL COLLAPSE

Ayyubid specialists in siege mining dig a tunnel, pack it with wood and light it on fire to weaken the ground, and ultimately collapse the wall. Muslim infantry charges through the 90-metre-wide breach to gain a foothold inside the north wall.

01 CONSTRUCTION ZONE

While Saladin conducts a reconnaissance of the terrain surrounding Jerusalem, he orders his troops to cut tree branches and construct zaribas, which were tall screens to protect Muslim bowmen and engineers from quarrels and arrows fired from archers and crossbowmen on the battlements of Jerusalem.

03 COUNTER-BATTERY FIRE

A battery of Crusader mangonels mounted atop the Herodian Tower behind David's Gate hurl stones at Saladin's men on the west side of the city.



06 CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

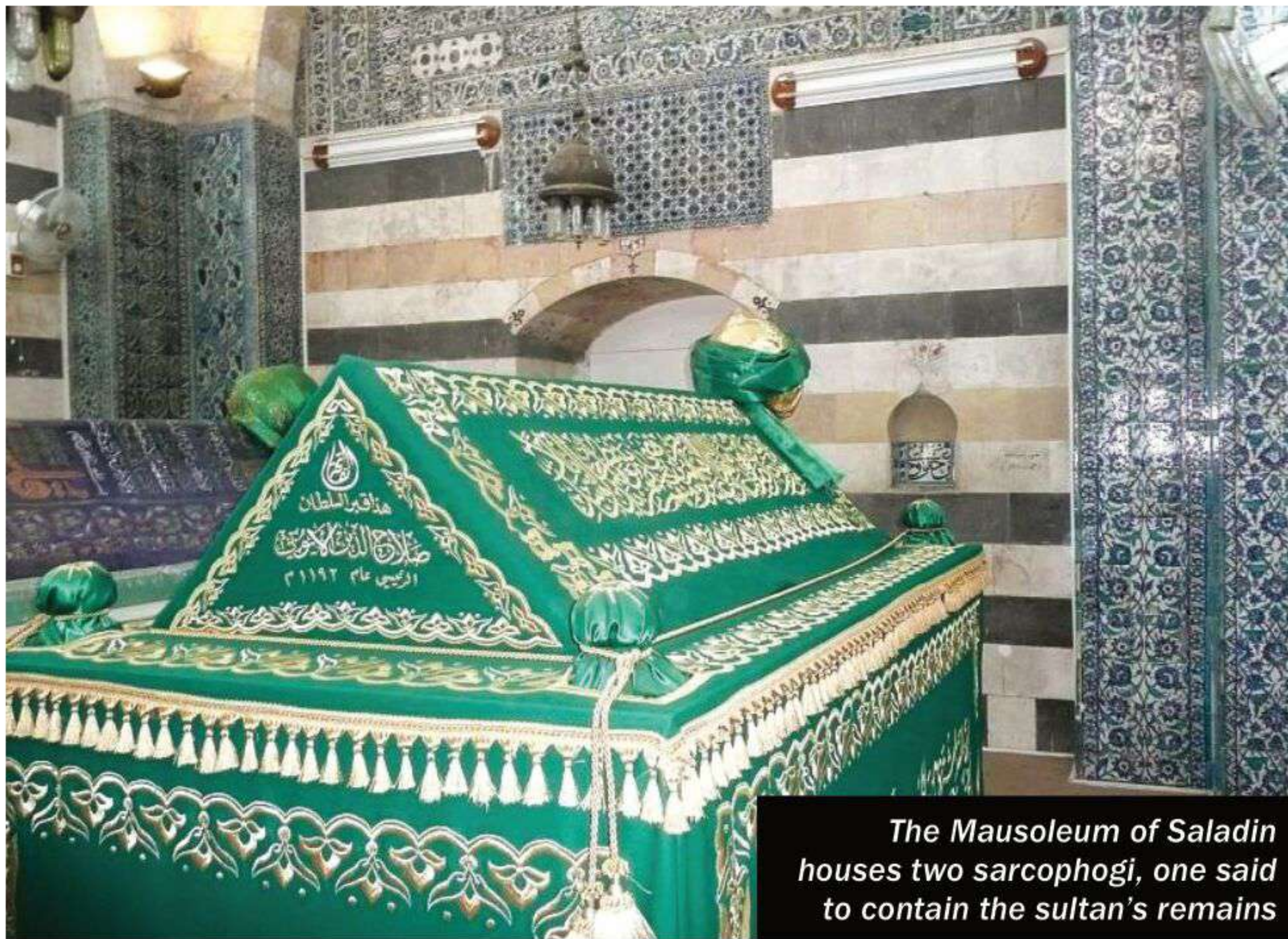
Patriarch Heraclius asks for 50 volunteers to guard the newly made breach the night of 29-30 September for 5,000 bezants, but not a single soldier volunteers. Balian surrenders the city the following day.

04 CRUSADER SORTIES

Crusader cavalry sallies forth each morning to disrupt the Muslims' progress by destroying equipment, but Saladin eventually posts heavy cavalry to protect his archers and sappers.

02 FIRE AND STONES

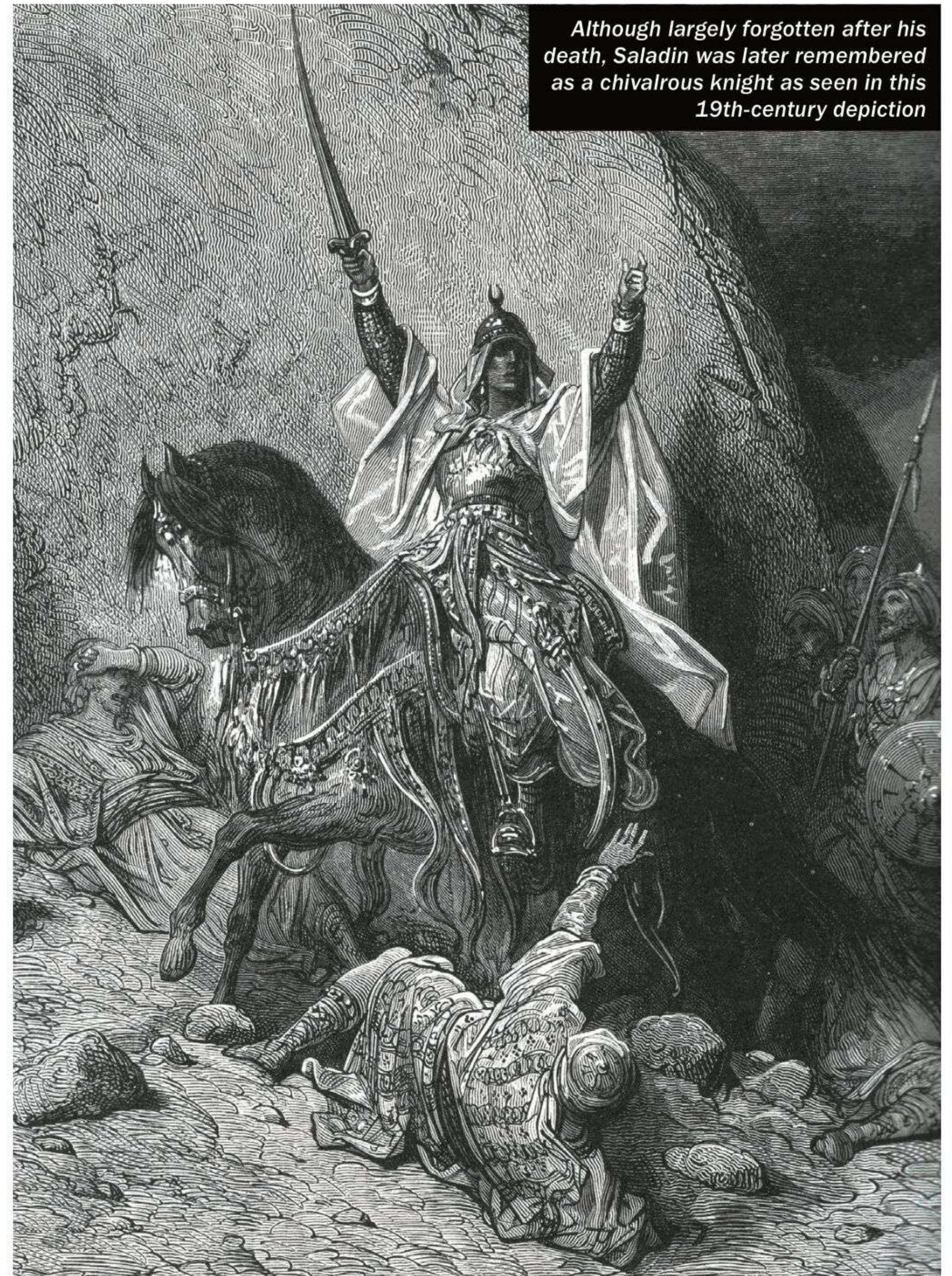
The Muslims bombard the city with 40 mangonels. The mangonels hurl stones, naphtha and, when the wind is blowing in the right direction, sand to temporarily blind the defenders.



The Mausoleum of Saladin houses two sarcophagi, one said to contain the sultan's remains



Jerusalem's Damascus Gate was known as St Stephen's gate during the Crusaders' occupation



Although largely forgotten after his death, Saladin was later remembered as a chivalrous knight as seen in this 19th-century depiction

The rank and file of the Crusader army were led away to be sold into slavery.

Saladin is said to have called Guy and Raynald of Chatillon into his tent. He gave a goblet filled with iced water to Guy, but when Guy sought to pass it to Raynald, Saladin stopped him. Saladin then made good on his vow to kill Raynald and cut him down with his sword.

The Ayyubid sultan rightly assumed that the barons who escaped would appeal to the Latin West for reinforcements, and he sent his troops to capture as many key towns and strongholds in the Kingdom of Jerusalem as possible before reinforcements arrived. After capturing Acre on 8 July, Saladin turned his attention to Tyre. Fortunately for the Christians, a new leader had arrived earlier that month. Marquis Conrad of Montferrat, who sought to escape problems at home by taking up the cross, organised a strong defence. Saladin, who was impatient to capture Jerusalem, turned south.

Saladin's 20,000 troops arrived before the walls of Jerusalem more than two months later on 20 September. Balian of Ibelin commanded approximately 5,000 men. The population had swelled to 60,000 as a result of an influx of refugees. Unlike the setback at Tyre, the sultan had no intention of abandoning the siege. The

Ayyubid leader "took an oath not to depart until he had honoured his word and raised his standard on her highest point, and had visited with his own feet the place where the Prophet [Muhammed] had set foot," wrote Imad ad-Din, who was Saladin's field secretary.

Saladin's men deployed on the north and west side opposite St Stephen's and David's gates, respectively. Over the course of five days, the Ayyubids assaulted the gates and attempted to scale the walls. After such time, the Muslims could not make any headway in their attempts to storm the west wall. For that reason, Saladin ordered them to redeploy in an arc that wrapped around the north-east corner of the city. He also issued orders for professional sappers from Aleppo to mine the walls. Several teams worked tirelessly for the next four days to weaken the walls. On 29 September, they collapsed a section of the outer wall on the north side near Herod's Gate.

Saladin spared the city. Instead of slaughtering innocents, he decided to allow them to ransom themselves. Once the ransom was paid, they would have 40 days to leave. The idea came from Saladin's advisers, according to al-Athir. "Let us consider them as already being our prisoners, and let them

ransom themselves on terms agreed between us," Saladin's advisers told him.

Saladin thus set a ransom of ten gold pieces for each man, five for each woman and one for each child. About two-thirds of the Christians could pay their own ransom, but the rest were too poor to make the payment. Balian gave Saladin 30,000 gold pieces from the city's coffers to cover 7,000 of the poor, but the other 13,000 were led away to be sold into slavery.

The Muslims took control of Jerusalem on 2 October. Ayyubid banners were hoisted throughout the city. A week later, Saladin attended Friday prayers in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque. Afterwards, the sultan ordered the mosque, which had been desecrated, be restored to its original glory with marble, gold tiling and mosaics.

Shortly afterwards, King Richard I of England and King Philip II of France both took the cross determined to recapture Jerusalem. They participated in the bloody Third Crusade against Saladin from 1189 to 1192. Although the Crusaders retook Acre and other strongholds, they couldn't recapture the Holy City. Jerusalem remained in Muslim hands as a result of Saladin's ability to unify and mobilise previously divided Muslim groups against the Crusaders.



COUNTER ATTACK

The Latins tried in vain to drive away the invading army with arrows and spears, throwing down large rocks or even molten lead at the attackers.

TAKING THE HOLY CITY

Saladin's siege of Jerusalem lasted two long weeks, but it paid off

On 20 September 1187, the Ayyubid sultan and his armies arrived at the gates of Jerusalem. Saladin, preferring to take the city without bloodshed, offered generous terms to crusader noble Balian of Ibelin, but those inside the city refused to leave. And so the siege began, starting outside the Damascus Gate where Saladin's archers pelted the ramparts with arrows. Siege towers were rolled up to the walls but were pushed back each time. After six days, the army moved to the Mount of Olives, where there was no major gate from which the Crusaders could launch a counterattack. It was here where they would finally breach the walls. On 2 October, Balian surrendered.

MINING THE WALL

Saladin's success came from below the ground. A portion of the wall was mined and a fire was lit below, and it collapsed on 29 September.

SIEGE TOWER

These were often constructed on site and built to be the same height as the walls. Archers would shoot from the top while they were rolled towards the city.

BATTERING RAM

Large, heavy logs were encased in an arrow-proof, fire-resistant canopy mounted on wheels. The log was then swung from ropes against the city walls.

ARCHERS

Ten thousand archers were ordered to shoot at the Latin soldiers, while another ten thousand horsemen armed with lances and bows prepared to attack.

MANGONEL

Several mangonels were used during the siege, which propelled giant stones to weaken the defences. They also helped to drive defenders away from their positions.

GREEK FIRE

The Islamic derivative of Greek fire was known as 'naft' and had a petroleum base with sulfur. It could be shot from catapults and would burst into flame upon impact.

TREBUCHET

Saladin's counterweight trebuchets could fling projectiles weighing up to 160kg at or into enemy fortifications, and were devastatingly effective.

“TO THE DISGRACE OF
ALL OF CHRISTENDOM,
JESUS’S CITY HAD FALLEN
TO THE SARACENS”



RICHARD THE LIONHEART

Born to royalty but educated in the charnel gutter of war, King Richard brought the religious fanaticism of the Christian West on the Muslim East in a quest to claim the fabled Holy Land



For almost a year the mighty city of Acre held firm. Despite wave after wave of Christian knights pouring all their religious fervour and military might into its ancient walls, it had held back the tide and somehow halted the progress of the foreign hordes that now threatened to overrun the entire Near East.

More and more men came, though – the attacks were relentless. When the first army had been held at bay, the city's inhabitants thought they were safe, that the invasion was defeated. However, then yet another army landed and the city's main artery, its port, which provided passage in and out of its walls, was taken. The city's defences were tested once more, with an even more ferocious attack battering at the doors and calling for blood. Luckily for those within, once more the city held off the mass of warriors, its infidel leaders repelled.

Then, with the new year's sailing season, another invader arrived by sea with a fresh bloodthirsty army. He was followed in May by yet another, with tens of thousands of soldiers joining the infidels' camp outside the walls, swelling their numbers to terrifying proportions. They attacked again and the losses on both sides were massive. The lack of food and supplies in the city, and the spread of disease within the invaders' camp drove both sets of warriors to extremes, stoking the fires of faith that lay within their hearts to pursue bolder and bolder acts of violence.

Today is the eighth day of June 1191 and, as Acre slowly suffocates in the oppressive heat of the Levant's summer months, yet another fleet is landing in the city's once-prosperous port, this time with one of the biggest forces the city has ever seen. If the ruler of Acre, the noble and great Saladin, doesn't send meaningful reinforcements soon, then the city will fall and the gates to the Holy Land will be brutally wrenched open to the Christian hordes.

They call this one, this man-mountain stepping off his ship onto the dusty dry shore, the Lionheart, and he is here to kill them all in the name of his god and glory. The passage had been long and painful, featuring storms, shipwrecks and a mad despot who threatened to derail the Third Crusade before it had even begun. No matter, King Richard the Lionheart and his army had survived the trip across the Mediterranean Sea and reached the Holy Land. After months of pursuit and planning, they were primed to fulfil their mission, Richard's mission, God's mission, to take the Holy Land by storm and cut a direct path to the holiest of all cities, Jerusalem.

To the disgrace of all of Christendom, Jesus's city had fallen four years previous to the Saracen Ayyubid hordes, which was now not only ruled by Christianity's arch-nemesis Saladin, but also defiled by their very presence within its hallowed walls. The city, which had been safely held in Christian hands for almost 100 years since the First Crusade had established the Kingdom of

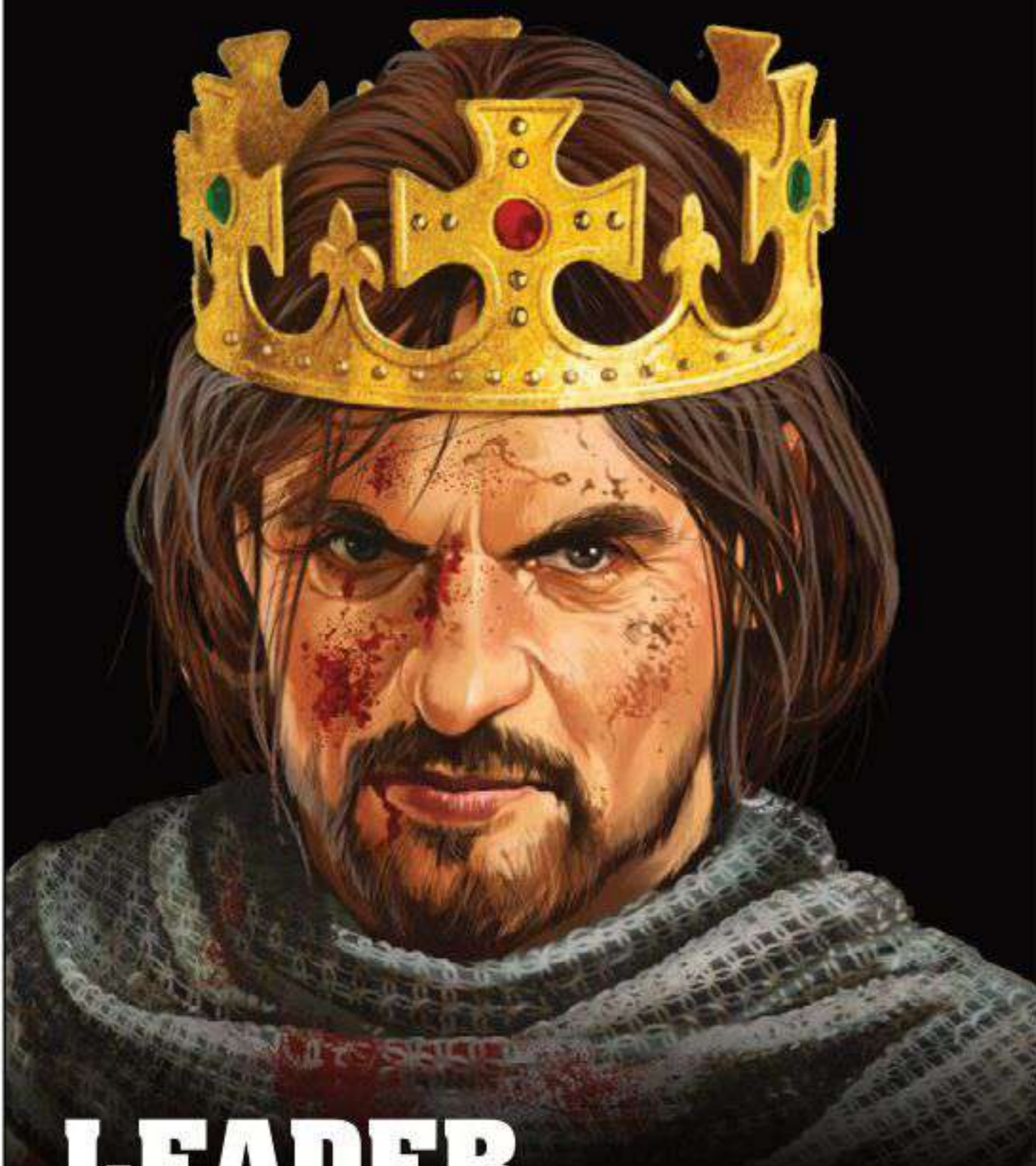
Jerusalem in 1099, had been ordered to be retaken by none other than the Pope in Rome. Richard, a devout and deeply religious king, had heeded the call. Here he now stood, ready to do his duty to the one true god. Conquering Acre was merely the first step in wresting Jerusalem from Saladin's grip.

So far the city's capture and wider crusade had been in the hands of a number of other leaders. These included Guy of Lusignan – a proud Poitevin knight and the supposed rightful king of Jerusalem through his marriage to Sibylla of Jerusalem – and King Philip II of France, who had helped raise the 'Saladin tithe' to pay for the crusade. The Duke of Austria, Leopold V, had overall command of the imperial forces. There had been yet more leaders at the siege's instigation the summer previous but illness and disease had claimed many over the winter months, with Frederick of Swabia and even the holy Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem all passing from this mortal world into the next.

The siege itself had stalled, so every passing week threatened to allow Saladin to outmanoeuvre the crusaders. Richard, being the honed and experienced military leader that he was, realised this and after meeting with the other leaders, gave orders for vast siege engines to be built, ones that could bring down the city's walls. These engines, these machines of death, once completed, towered over the Christian knights and, when unleashed, brought the siege into a deadly endgame.

CRUSADERS

NUMBER OF TROOPS:
20,000



LEADER

RICHARD THE LIONHEART

Excellent on the battlefield, Richard the Lionheart was a brutal killer and a gifted tactical thinker, leading an army of religious fanatics with ruthless efficiency.

Strength Amazing warrior and powerful military leader.

Weakness Politically and economically reckless as king.

KEY UNIT

TEMPLAR KNIGHT

The most skilled Christian fighting unit to take part in the Third Crusade, the Knights Templar were wealthy, well-trained and fanatical fighters, driven by a holy purpose.

Strength Well-equipped and trained in hand-to-hand combat.

Weakness Few in number and fanatically religious, leading to recklessness.



KEY WEAPON
BROADSWORD

The most popular hand-to-hand weapon of all Christian knight orders, including the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, the broadsword was a well-balanced and deadly weapon capable of stabbing and cleaving.

Strength Great all-round weapon that also allowed shield use.

Weakness Could be out-ranged with two-handed swords and spears.

BATTLE OF ARSUF

A major battle in the Third Crusade, Arsuf saw Richard and Saladin face off



01 THE WOOD OF ARSUF

After taking Acre, Richard set out for his next target, Arsuf. To get there, he had to move south along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and then traverse the Wood of Arsuf, one of the few forested regions in all of the Levant. Saladin knew this and after tracking and harassing Richard's slow-moving baggage train and infantry, decided the woods would be the ideal position to strike.

02 A NARROW PLAIN

Richard, wary of an assault on his convoy, proceeded slowly through the Wood of Arsuf, making the first 10km (6mi) without incident. Saladin had already identified a striking point however – a narrow clear plain in the forest approximately 9km (5.5mi) from Arsuf. Saladin intended to engage in skirmishes along the length of the convoy and then hit its rear with a decisive attack.

04 SALADIN ATTACKS

As soon as Richard's convoy reached the plain Saladin's forces attacked. At the front, Saladin sent a dense swarm of skirmishers, while behind them streamed squadrons of heavy cavalry and foot and horse archers, splitting so that the army attacked from the centre, left and right.

03 SCOUTS AT DAWN

Moving out of their camp at dawn on 7 September 1191, Richard's scouts reported Saladin's scouts could be seen. Richard realised that this meant Saladin's full army was nearby and started to arrange his army. Men were deployed at the fore and rear of the convoy column, with the van – the foremost division – made up of the Knights Templar under the command of their 11th grand master, Robert de Sable.

05 CRUSADER FLANKS HOLD

Saladin's chief tactic was to break the flanks of the crusader column and ordered incursions of javelin throwers and mounted archers to perform lightning strikes along their flanks and retreating before crusader crossbowmen could retaliate. The flanks held, though.

Colossal boulders rained down upon Acre's walls, smashing against them with thunderous brutality. Corpses of animals and Muslim soldiers littered the city's streets, spreading disease and sapping the morale of the terrified residents. Most fearsome of all though, flaming balls and arrows set ablaze anything that wasn't made out of stone, causing panic to quickly spread among Acre's populace. The surviving Muslim soldiers defended bravely, but the sheer carnage and

chaos the machines and men of war now levied on the city was too much and, after a month of death and destruction, the remaining Muslim garrison within the city surrendered, which was a direct violation of Saladin's orders.

On receiving the news of Acre's fall, Saladin immediately set out for the city. On his way he received news that Richard had taken the surrendering Muslim garrison of 2,400



Counter seal (1195) of Richard I of England

10 AYYUBID ARMY SCATTERS

Its right wing smashed, the Ayyubid army soon routed, scattering back into the hills and forests south of Arsuf. Richard, realising the pursuing knights could be ambushed in a surprise counterattack, drew the warriors back into an orderly formation at Arsuf and ordered them to pitch camp at the now-secure fortress. Saladin was forced to retreat with his reputation as an invincible leader tarnished.

09 TEMPLARS LET LOOSE

Freed from the tactical order to defend and maintain discipline, the crusader knights took the fight to the Saracens, unleashing their hatred and combat prowess in one brutal wave of death. The right wing of Saladin's army couldn't sustain the assault and collapsed almost immediately, with Richard himself weighing into the heart of the fighting. As a bloody revenge for the day's attacks was complete, the Knights Templar set off in pursuit of the fleeing Saracens.

08 COUNTERATTACK SLAMS HOME

Garnier de Nablus disobeyed orders in counterattacking, but with the Hospitaller charging, Richard knew they needed support and ordered his army to engage with them. The full weight of the crusader army therefore suddenly switched emphasis from defence to attack, ramming into the Ayyubid army with immense ferocity.

06 HOSPITALLERS COME UNDER ATTACK

Saladin shifted the focus point of his army to the rear of column, engaging the Knights Hospitaller. Saladin joined the assault along with his brother to inspire his men to make a breakthrough. Richard held the convoy together despite some losses and edged them toward Arsuf.

07 KNIGHTS BREAK RANK

Richard reached Arsuf in the middle of the afternoon, with the besieged Hospitaller vanguard retreating into the fortress city. Line discipline was finally lost and a melee began. Seeing his men in trouble, the grand master of the Knights Hospitaller, Garnier de Nablus, broke ranks and charged the Saracens.

MUSLIMS

NUMBER OF TROOPS:

25,000



LEADER

SALADIN

He attained his exalted position as leader of the Ayyubid army and founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and was a wise and experienced military commander.

Strength Respected tactical thinker and powerful politician.

Weakness Hands-off leader with little personal combat prowess.



KEY UNIT

MOUNTED ARCHER

The light cavalry of Saladin was feared throughout the world due to its ability to strike quickly and at range, with skilled marksmen riding the world's fastest horses.

Strength Fast units that excelled in ambush and hit-and-run attacks.

Weakness Easily cut down by knights in hand-to-hand combat.

KEY WEAPON

SHORT BOW

Saladin's mamluk infantry and his light cavalry units excelled in bowmanship, with their short bows used to swarm arrows on crusader forces at every opportunity.

Strengths Fast to fire and reload with good stopping power.

Weakness Could be outranged by the longbow and all-but-useless in hand-to-hand combat.

men captive and was offering their return for a ransom. Saladin, known for his loyalty to his men and his wisdom, agreed to the ransom, which not only included monetary compensation but also the release of all of his Christian prisoners.

In Acre the banners of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, France, England and the Duchy of Austria fluttered in the light breeze. With Acre down, Richard knew that only the city of Jaffa to the south stood in their way of making a direct assault on Jerusalem, so he began making preparations for the continued crusade, as

well as for the reparation of the sacked city. These preparations were swiftly interrupted by an argument that developed between the conquering leaders as to how the city should be divided up and to how the spoils of their victory should be apportioned. This quarrelling led Richard to strike down the Austrian standard from above the city's walls, slighting Leopold, as the king of England sided with Guy of Lusignan rather than Philip and Leopold over who should become king of Jerusalem when the city was taken. Philip and Leopold preferred fellow crusader and Italian nobleman Conrad of



Due to its position of strategic importance, Acre was often the scene of violence

LIONHEART'S CRUSADE

The Third Crusade faced challenges even before reaching the Holy Land



"THEY CALL THIS ONE THE LIONHEART AND HE IS HERE TO KILL THEM ALL IN THE NAME OF HIS GOD AND GLORY"

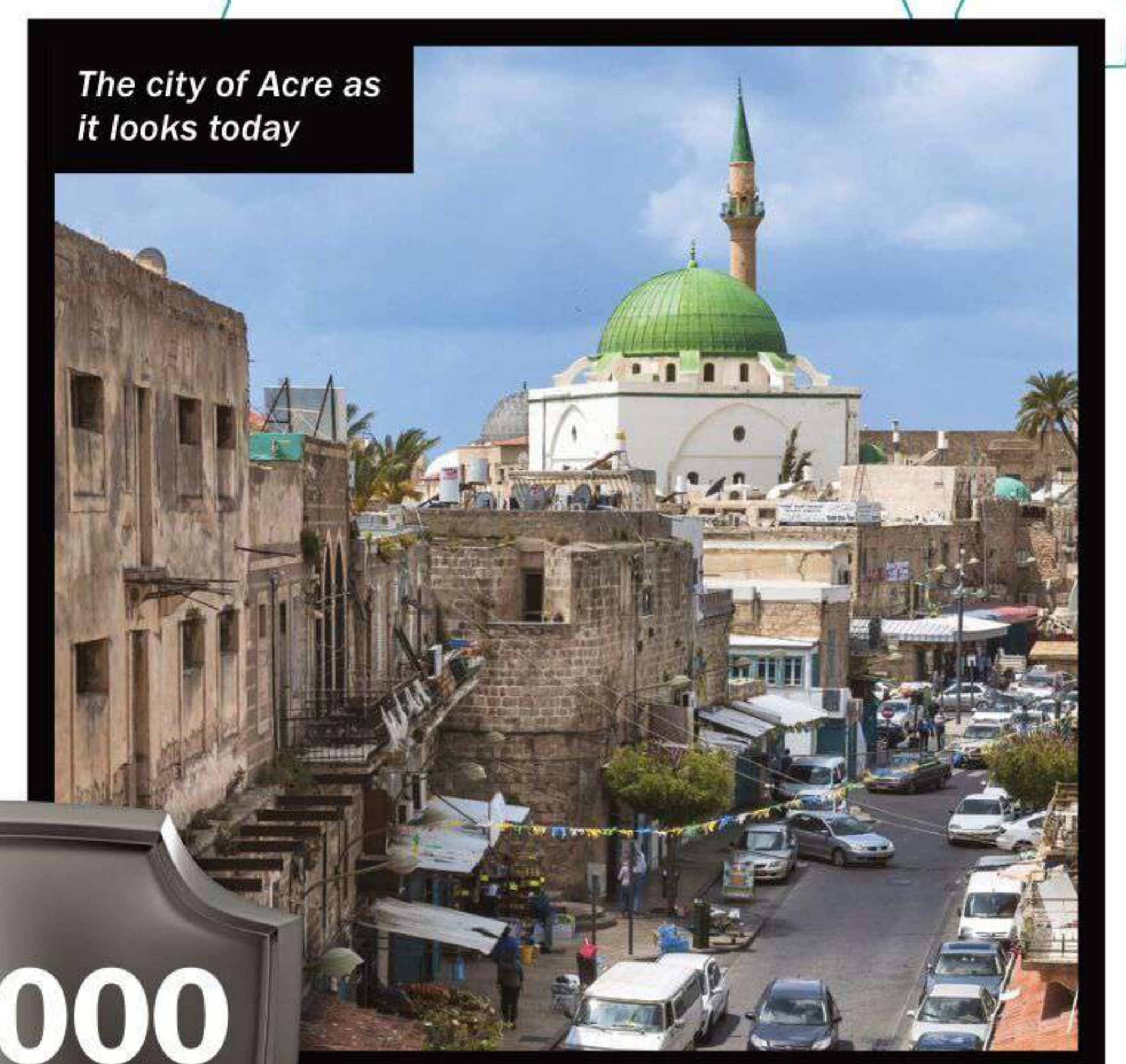
Montferrat, with Phillip so angry he threatened to return to Europe.

This cauldron of scheming and disagreement was tipped over the edge when Saladin delayed in paying the garrison's ransom. An already irate and disgruntled Richard deemed the lateness a massive slight and ordered every single one of the garrison to be executed. Saladin reached the city just as the decision was made, but could only watch as man after man was publicly executed, their heads lopped from their shoulders atop the city walls. Thousands died. The enraged Saladin replied like-for-like, executing the 1,000 Christian prisoners in his custody. Whatever deal could conceivably have been reached between the rival leaders now lay in ruins, seemingly as dead as the unfortunate prisoners.

Angered and frustrated with Richard and Guy, Philip and Leopold finally decided that their participation in the Third Crusade was at an

end, leaving in late August for their European homes. For Richard, though, such betrayal of faith was unimaginable, and after calling on the Philip to do right in the eyes of god, managed to persuade him to leave behind 10,000 French crusaders along with the necessary funds to pay for their upkeep. The Lionheart was now the central remaining commander of over 20,000 crusaders, knights and soldiers alike and, burning with glorious purpose, ordered the continuation of the crusade, with the bulk of the crusading army marching out of Acre in August's final days. This was no doubt who was now leading this holy crusade.

The next city on the crusaders' relentless march to Jerusalem was Jaffa, an important port that provided passage into the southern



£70,000
Amount raised by the 'Saladin tithe' to fund the Third Crusade

Mediterranean Sea. As long as Jaffa remained untaken Saladin had a natural avenue to pour more of his troops into the region from his impregnable stronghold of Egypt, but if it fell to the crusaders Saladin would be forced to move men over land, a far less effective and more time-consuming proposition. The city also lay a mere 65 kilometres (40 miles) from Jerusalem, making

ANATOMY OF A TEMPLAR KNIGHT

The key kit and weapons carried by the most elite of Christian warriors

Helmet

Decapitation resistance

The great helm was the mainstay of the Templar Order and offered excellent protection against blows, as did the sugarloaf helmet. Due to narrow viewing corridors and high temperatures experienced in the Holy Land, many opted for more lightweight alternatives with open faces.

Jerkin

A guaranteed chafe-free experience

Unseen, however often critical in keeping a Knight Templar breathing, was the haubergeon, a padded jerkin that sat against his skin. The jerkin extended over much of the upper body and was the last line of defence from enemy blows. In colder climates, it also helped keep the warrior warm – not an issue in the Holy Land.

Broadsword

Designed to hack and slash

As standard for western knights, the typical Knight Templar was armed with a broadsword, however when fighting on horseback spears were also used. Sometimes, two-handed broadswords were opted for while fighting on foot, but while they granted extra reach and cleaving power, they left the knight shieldless.

Surcoat

It ain't half hot in the Holy Land

Above the knight's chainmail sat the visible surcoat. This white garment not only kept the Sun off their metal armour, also displayed the symbols of the Order.

Chainmail

Thy enemy's blade shall not pass against enemy strikes, the hauberk, a long-sleeved shirt of chainmail fitted with chain covers for the hands and a chain coif hood for the head, was a knight's armour. The chainmail would be partnered with iron chausses to protect their legs.

Shield

The first and best line of defence

Adorned with the Christian cross of their order, the Templar shield was large and long, with a teardrop design protecting their entire torso and upper legs. It was constructed from wood and had a metal rim, the latter helping to protect against it splitting under the weight of sword blows. It had a leather handgrip at the rear.

8,000

English knights
and soldiers
who journeyed
to the Holy
Land

it the ideal coastal base for crusaders. Before it could be taken, though, the crusaders needed to get there in one piece. Richard knew Saladin was somewhere in the nearby area and, aware of his enemy's skill in arranging ambushes, ordered his troops to march down the Mediterranean coastline, with the baggage train protected by being nearest to the coast. This tactic prevented Saladin from attacking on one flank, as Richard also got his fleet to sail down the coast in parallel with them, shutting off the sea as an avenue of possible attack.

However, to the north of Jaffa lay the Wood of Arsuf, one of the only forested areas in all of the Levant. The woods ran parallel to the coastline for over 20 kilometres (12 miles) and had to be traversed by Richard's army if they were to reach Jaffa. After harassing Richard's troops with small hit-and-run attacks within the woods, Saladin sanctioned a full-scale assault

on the crusaders, which led to the largest pitched battle of the Third

Crusade. Saladin knew the battle would be decisive, but couldn't possibly have foreseen how disastrous for him it would be. As the Sun went down on 7 September 1191 the Saracen army had been routed in a decisive counterattack led by Richard's Knights Hospitaller.

Saladin retreated from Arsuf to regroup what was left of his battered army and lick his wounds.

The crusaders made a beeline for Jaffa, swiftly besieging and taking it. Despite some disagreement with the other crusader leaders, Richard – with Jerusalem almost in sight – decided to open negotiations with his enemy. Saladin, who was being questioned by some of his subjects following the defeat at Arsuf, agreed to the negotiations and sent his brother, Al-Adil to Jaffa to lead the talks.

Despite headway being made – at one time Richard's sister Joan was being talked about as a potential bride for Al-Adil with Jerusalem as a wedding gift – the talks ultimately broke down.

The breakdown of the talks caused unrest in the crusader ranks, with arguments arising

**“SALADIN COULD ONLY
WATCH AS MAN AFTER MAN
WAS PUBLICLY EXECUTED,
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about the best way to proceed toward their goal. Richard, growing tired of the constant in-fighting, acted decisively and ordered the army to move on Jerusalem in November, first moving through Ascalon and then Latrun. The Christian army was soon at Beit Nuba, a mere 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Jerusalem.

The news quickly spread of the crusaders' progress and the morale in the Muslim garrisons within the city crumbled. Saladin's forces had been crushed, Acre, Arsuf and Jaffa taken and Jerusalem looked set to be next. Victory for the Third Crusade seemed inevitable.

At this vital point hesitation crept into the crusader ranks, though. Saladin had proven himself a worthy and tricky foe and, not knowing the extent to which his forces had been depleted, Richard feared that a retaliation attack, most likely another large-scale ambush, was very near. In addition, the weather in the winter months had taken a marked turn for the worse, with heavy rain and hail leading to poor conditions under foot. These factors caused Richard to pause for thought rather than make straight for the holy city and he consulted his fellow crusaders. It was agreed that if they started besieging Jerusalem and were hit with a relieving force from Saladin, the general poor conditions would lead to a massacre. As such, Richard ordered a retreat back to the coast. The attack would have to wait.

The invading army spent the rest of the winter months in Ascalon before continuing hostilities in the spring of 1192. Saladin, who had been forced by his emirs (commanders) to disband much of what was left of his army – the emirs favouring consolidation rather than

KNOW THY ENEMY: SALADIN

The main features and kit of the most respected Muslim warrior of all

2,700
Muslim
prisoners
Richard had
executed
in the city
of Acre

Swords

Straight and deadly

The swords the Saracens used in the period of the Crusades were generally straight, unlike the curved blades often depicted in films of the period.

Armour

For the high-ranking

While the lower ranking Saracens wore little or no armour higher ranking warriors and leaders such as Saladin would often wear mail coats or other armour under their robes.

Horseback rider

Warfare on the move

The Saracen army in the Third Crusade had a good number of cavalrymen – more than their Christian counterparts. The soldiers on these horses were normally archers and could be very effective when harassing their enemy.

Physical appearance

Slight, not scary

Most accounts of Saladin make reference to him being quite slight and frail – he did not have the imposing physical stature of Richard but was well respected for his wisdom and piety.

The modern day city of Jerusalem



Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub (Saladin) was the first sultan of Egypt and Syria and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. He was elevated to this lofty position through a series of military victories, first under the Fatimid government and then his own leadership, with him overseeing the decisive Battle of Hattin in 1187. It was due to Saladin himself that the Third Crusade was instigated, with the fallout from the Battle of Hattin and the fall of Jerusalem leading to the famous 'Saladin tithe', a tax levied in England and some parts of France to finance an army that was capable of reclaiming the holy territory.

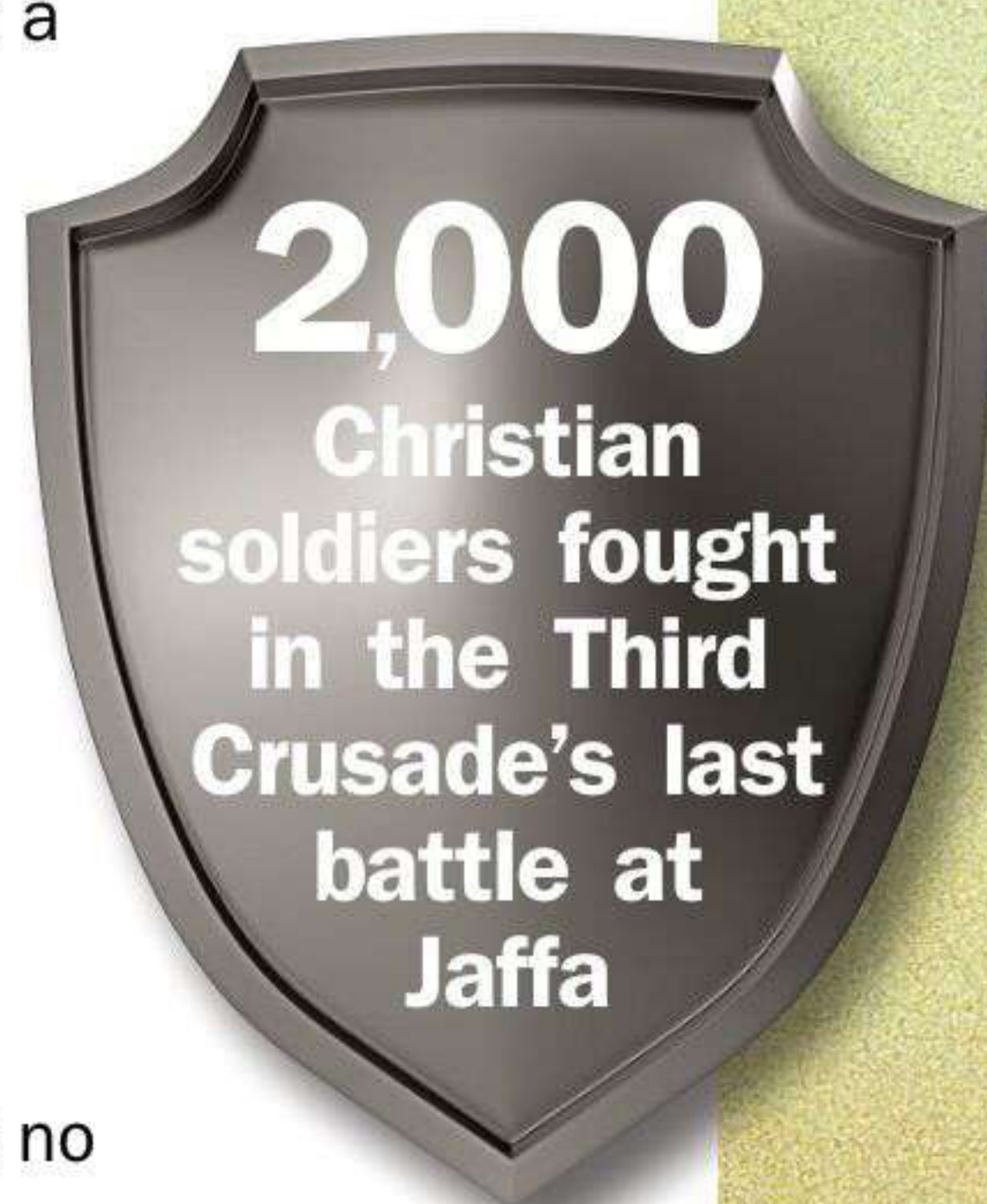
Despite Saladin and Richard's armies clashing multiple times during the Third Crusade, the two men famously shared a more complicated relationship than would have been expected, with great respect reported on both sides. After the Battle of Arsuf – a battle in which Saladin's army was soundly beaten – Saladin sent Richard two excellent horses as Richard had lost his own in the battle. The two men never met in person, though, and Saladin died a year after the Third Crusade, struck down by a fever while staying in Damascus.

open hostilities – launched no major attack. However, bands of Saracen troops constantly plagued the crusaders, with a series of small fights and skirmishes slowly eroding the crusader army's numbers and morale. This came to a head on 22 May when the fortified town of Darum fell to the crusader forces after five days of bloody fighting. The crusaders had won great battles in the Holy Land but no more armies were journeying across the Mediterranean to bolster their forces; those men who fell in battle weren't going to be replaced. Richard's crusade was faltering, its primary purpose slipping away like sand in an hourglass.

The crusading king of England managed to marshal his remaining forces together for one last advance on Jerusalem, marching inland in June of that year. This time, far from being checked at Beit Nuba, the crusaders actually came within sight of the hallowed city. The time, it appeared, had finally come. Richard was to return Jesus's city to its rightful owners and reinstate Christianity as the dominant religious and military power in the Holy Land. However, as the tired, dusty and bronzed warriors stood there watching the distant city from afar, once more the poison of dissent started to seep among its leaders.

Despite standing before the city, months of resentment over the course the Crusade had taken boiled over among the military commanders, with debate over the best military course of action descending into personal attacks and squabbles. The majority of the leaders, including Richard, believed the best way to take Jerusalem was not besiege it but to attack Saladin directly in Egypt, thereby forcing him to relinquish it of his own free will as a bargaining chip to prevent his own fall. However, the leader of the surviving French crusaders, the Duke of Burgundy Hugh III, believed the only course of action was an immediate and direct assault on the city. News of the split in the leaders' plans filtered down to the crusaders themselves, with the knights and soldiers now breaking previous allegiances and siding with one side or the other, splitting the crusader army in two.

Neither of the two forces were now powerful enough to assault a city, let alone Jerusalem, and as such Richard was forced to order a retreat. While progressing back toward the coast, angry with the French, Richard decided to return to England. However, just as he was approaching Jaffa, news arrived via a scout



CRUSADING KING OR BLOODY MURDERER?

Historian Douglas Boyd gives his verdict on the Lionheart

Despite Richard's leading role in the Third Crusade, the opinion of Victorian historian Bishop William Stubbs was that this king was "a bad ruler, whose love of war effectively disqualified him from being a peaceful one; his utter want of political common sense from being a prudent one." Stubbs called him "a man of blood, whose crimes were those of one whom long use of warfare had made too familiar with slaughter, and a vicious man."

Respected historian of the crusades Sir Steven Runciman balanced the two sides of Richard's character: "He was a bad son, a bad husband and a bad king, but a gallant and splendid soldier." While Richard consistently displayed

supreme physical courage, gallant and splendid are not adjectives one would use today of the man who slaughtered 3,000 prisoners at the siege of Acre and nearly bankrupted the kingdom twice in his ten-year reign. The enduring legend of Richard as a heroic Christian warrior is due to the brilliant public-relations campaign of his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, to raise the ransom when he was taken hostage returning to England after the events of the Third Crusade.

*Douglas Boyd is the author of **Lionheart: The True Story Of England's Crusading King**, published by The History Press.*

"RICHARD BELIEVED THE BEST WAY TO TAKE JERUSALEM WAS NOT BESIEGE IT BUT TO ATTACK SALADIN DIRECTLY IN EGYPT"

that the city had fallen to Saladin, who had personally overseen the assault. Furthermore, the scout reported that the lives of all the people there were under a very real threat as the Muslim ruler had lost control of his army, the thousands of Muslim soldiers driven berserk due to the massacre at Acre.

With the lives of the surviving crusaders very firmly in his hands – after all, it had been Richard who ordered the Acre executions – a return to England would have to wait. With a band of 2,000 surviving knights and soldiers, Richard launched one final assault on Saladin, approaching Jaffa by sea in a surprise attack. The Ayyubid soldiers who

had only just taken the city were completely unprepared for the attack and were soon overrun, with a combination of knights and crusader crossbowmen decisively breaking their resistance. The attack was so brutally effective that Saladin was forced to flee from Jaffa to the south.

This would be the final battle of the Crusade for Saladin and Richard. Following Jaffa's second fall, the region entered a limbo-like stasis, with the Christian crusaders and Muslim Ayyubids sapped of any further willpower for bloodshed. The fighting had gone on for three years and large parts of the historic area lay in ruins. Tens of thousands of men,



Richard the Lionheart's forces on the march toward Jerusalem

WHY WAS JERUSALEM SO SOUGHT AFTER?

The geographical region of Palestine, between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, was referred to as the Holy Land by Christians and Muslims alike. Both religions claimed ownership due to an association with their faith, with the city of Jerusalem held in particular esteem. Both Islam and Christianity were Abrahamic monotheistic religions and as such, both sides considered the other to be unbelievers in the one true god and considered their presence heretical.

By the Third Crusade, Jerusalem and large parts of Palestine and the Levant region had changed hands again and again, with conflicts destabilising the region. Richard, coming from the Christian West, therefore perceived the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin's forces in 1187 as a direct attack on his faith. From Saladin's point of view he was merely taking back the spiritual heartland of his own faith; one that had previously rested in the hands of infidels.

women and children had lost their lives and, despite some areas of the Levant changing hands, nothing had really changed. Jerusalem remained under Muslim control, Saladin was ruler of the Ayyubid Empire and Richard the Lionheart was still the fierce warrior king with a renowned reputation in Europe without a firm foothold in the Holy Land. What had changed, though, was Saladin and Richard's desire for more war and bloodshed, and so a treaty soon followed. Jerusalem would remain under Muslim control but from now on, Christian pilgrims and traders would be permitted to visit the city, with their rights protected by law.

17
Months Richard the Lionheart remained in the Holy Land

For Richard, the treaty was to be his last act in the Holy Land and the final curtain for the Third Crusade, with the king setting out on his return to England immediately after. His return journey, though, would not be as straightforward as the one over, with a series of events leading to his own capture, temporary imprisonment and yet more battles. However, the war he would go down in history for was his quest for the Holy Land – a journey full of bloodshed, plunder and religious fanaticism, but little territorial success. It ensured his legacy would forever be debated between those who see him as a crusading Christian king and others who view him as an amoral, cold-blooded killer, a debate that still rages on.



WILLIAM WALLACE

Discover the man behind the myth and his savage guerrilla war to end England's tyranny



On an autumn morning in 1297, a Scottish army of spearmen, knights, squires, townsmen and peasants looked down from the rocky crag where they were encamped. Below them, the wide River Forth looped through a marshy plain, the only crossing a narrow wooden bridge and causeway. Since dawn the Scots had watched the movements of a large English army assembled on the far side of the river beneath the rock of Stirling Castle. The Scots would have seen the arming of several hundred knights and men at arms, and may have wondered how a mob of poorly trained footmen could withstand the charge of heavy horses and riders. They had witnessed their leaders, the young nobleman Andrew Moray and the fearsome 'commoner' William Wallace, reject an English call for their surrender. "Go back," Wallace told the English envoys, "we did not come here for the good of peace but you should know that we are ready to fight for vengeance and for the freedom of our kingdom." As the English vanguard filed slowly across the bridge, Wallace and Moray ordered their men to prepare for a battle that would

determine the fate of Scotland. The men who stood with Wallace and Moray at Stirling Bridge had been driven to take up arms by the disasters that had overtaken their homeland. These disasters began with a series of deaths that ended a period of relative peace and prosperity between King Edward I of England and his brother-in-law, Alexander III, king of Scotland. To Medieval writers, the royal dynasty was the golden thread that held the kingdom together, but in March 1286, that thread began to fray when tragedy struck.

Alexander had been riding at night to visit his queen when he was thrown from his horse and killed. His only living descendant was his three-year-old grandchild, Margaret, daughter of the king of Norway. As she was so young, parliament chose six guardians to rule Scotland in the name of their absent queen. These guardians turned to King Edward I of England – a neighbour and apparent friend – for help. It was agreed that Edward's son would marry Margaret – a match that would have united Scotland and England under a single dynasty – but the plan was foiled by Margaret's untimely death in 1290. The golden thread had snapped.

Scotland was left with no clear successor – a period known as the 'Great Cause' – with several ambitious families fighting over the throne, foremost among them the Balliols and Bruces. Facing civil war, the guardians once again turned to Edward, asking him to judge between the claimants. Before he agreed, the cunning king demanded that he be recognised as overlord of Scotland, and feeling they had no choice, they relented. Edward judged this Great Cause, choosing John Balliol as king in 1292. During the next three years, the English king asserted his rights over Scotland to the full. Though Balliol found it impossible to stand up to Edward, by 1296, many Scots were prepared to defy him. They allied with the French king, and in the face of this rebellion, Edward geared up for war.

The Scots were disastrously unprepared. From the outset, King John had no stomach for the fight, while his army, led by a group of nobles, manoeuvred ineffectively. At Easter 1296, the English king directed a huge force against the largest Scottish town, Berwick. Despite being defended only by a ditch and a timber palisade, the townsfolk defied the tall figure of the king, bombarding him with insults

LEGENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

as he rode to their gate. Edward's response was to send his host to storm the town and put many of its inhabitants to the sword. A month later, the Scots suffered a second lesson in warfare. The leader of King Edward's army, John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, caught the main Scottish host outside Dunbar Castle. The Scots advanced without caution and were routed. While large numbers of footmen were cut down, most of the nobles were able to flee to the castle where more than 100 surrendered.

In the face of these disasters, the will of the Scottish king and nobles to resist collapsed. Lords hurried to make peace with the English king as he advanced through Scotland. John Balliol had failed to lead his people in this time of crisis and for this he earned a reputation as a weak, ineffectual monarch. His nickname – 'Toom Tabard', or 'empty coat' – was derived from Balliol's surrender at Brechin in early July 1296. Edward had the hapless Balliol stripped of his surcoat bearing the lion rampant arms of Scotland's kings. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and the Stone of Destiny – the seat on which Scottish monarchs were enthroned – was captured. To cement his rule, Edward held a parliament in the wreckage of Berwick, forcing Scottish nobles – knights,



William Wallace rejects English terms shortly before the battle of Stirling Bridge



The Scottish infantry destroyed the English vanguard at the Battle of Stirling Bridge

bishops, and claimants to the throne – to pledge obedience to him. Nearly 1,900 names were scrawled on the infamous document: the Ragman Rolls.

Most of the leading nobles were held in custody in England, while the government of the country was left in the hands of ambitious English bureaucrats, such as the hated treasurer Hugh Cressingham. To ordinary Scots, used to being governed by compatriots who understood their laws and customs, this was a shock and an insult. Across the kingdom, Scottish townsmen, freeholders and peasants experienced this new regime through the orders of English sheriffs backed by soldiers based in local castles. These 'middle-folk' may have regarded the war of 1296 as a matter of rival kings, but now they witnessed the humiliation of their country. They were also forced to endure the demands of the English administration. To aid Edward's war against the French, he seized the goods of Scottish farmers and merchants, and it was feared that ordinary Scots were to be forced to serve in his army.

Amid this tense atmosphere emerged William Wallace. His origins remain mysterious, but the English denounced him as a brigand and scoffed when he was knighted that the Scots had tried to turn a raven into a swan. In reality, Wallace was the brother of a knight and was trained to carry weapons, but he was young and landless. Hence it would be his deeds and



This stylised image shows John Balliol abdicating the throne of Scotland before being transported to the Tower of London

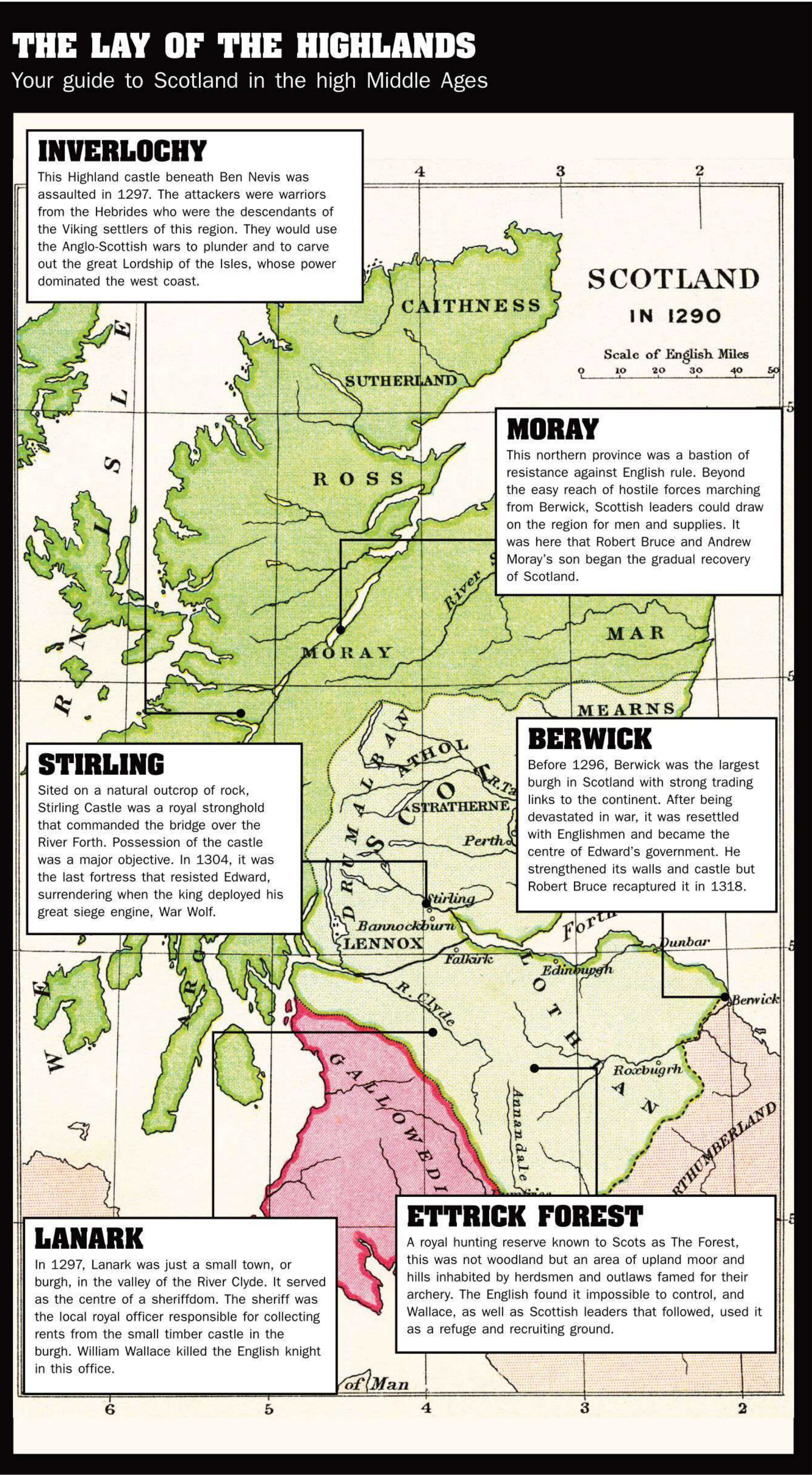
ability to inspire support, rather than his birth or rank, that turned him into a leader of his people. In early 1297, Wallace and a band of men ambushed and killed the sheriff of Lanark, William Heselrig. Though romanticised in later stories as an act of vengeance for the murder of his wife, Wallace’s action was planned as a blow by local men against foreign rule. It would be the start of open rebellion.

In the weeks after his slaying of the sheriff, Wallace’s supporters grew into an army of men from the ‘middle folk’ and peasants of south-west Scotland, but these events were part of a wider insurrection. Andrew Moray – a noble that had been imprisoned in England – managed to engineer his escape from Chester Castle and return to his home in northern Scotland.

Like Wallace, Moray was young and determined, however, his father owned vast estates and many of his tenants rallied to join his son in arms. In late May 1297, his band of followers – in alliance with the townsfolk of Inverness – expelled the English garrison and attacked Urquhart Castle on Loch Ness.

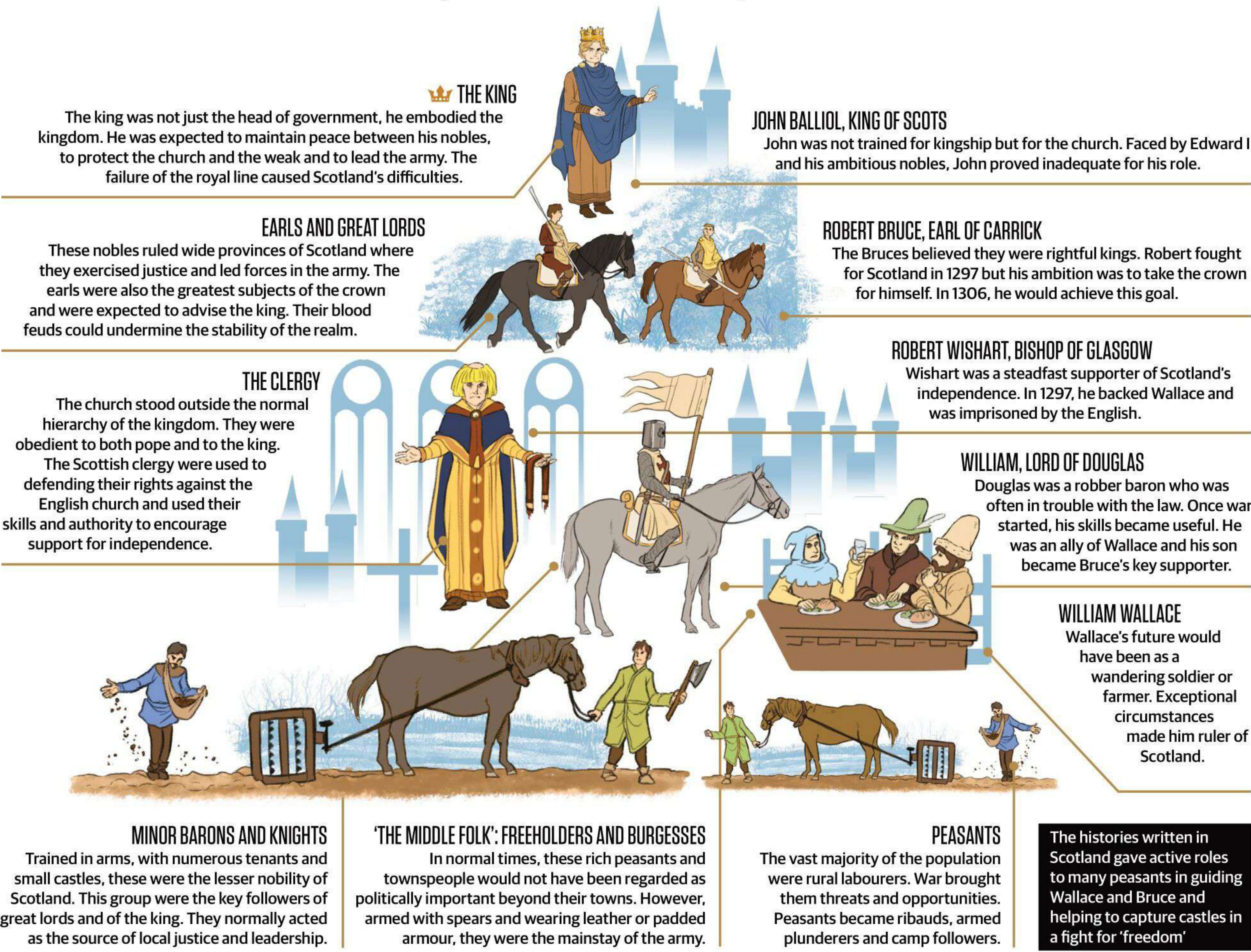
The English misunderstood their enemies. They quickly rounded up the nobles who had risen in support of Wallace, but then, in the words of Hugh Cressingham, “The English had gone to sleep.” Wallace and his band had slipped away from the west into the hills of Ettrick Forest, where men continued to flock to his banner. Meanwhile, more than

“IT WOULD BE WALLACE’S DEEDS AND ABILITY TO INSPIRE SUPPORT, RATHER THAN HIS BIRTH OR RANK, THAT TURNED HIM INTO A LEADER OF HIS PEOPLE”



LAIRDS AND LADIES

Divisive loyalties led to instability in the realm



300 kilometres to the north, Moray was also winning ground, picking off isolated English garrisons. King Edward in London and his officials in Berwick could only write letters asking Scottish lords to stop Moray. By August, English authority north of the Tay had collapsed and Wallace was able to lead his followers north to join forces with Andrew Moray's band outside Dundee. Faced with this crisis, the Earl of Surrey finally took charge. He assembled an army of perhaps 5,000 infantry and 500 heavy cavalry from northern England and led it towards the English-held castle at Stirling.

This location was the strategic key to Scotland. It was no accident that three of the major battles of the Scottish wars were fought within sight of the castle. Perched high on its rock, this stronghold commanded Stirling Bridge, which provided the only land route for

an army seeking access to northern Scotland. If he was to win back the north for his king, Surrey had to cross. His enemies knew this, too. By the morning of 11 September, Moray and Wallace were encamped with their men on Abbey Craig, a rocky outcrop to the north of the bridge that gave them a clear view of the plain below. They may have led a similar number of men to Surrey but had few or no horsemen.

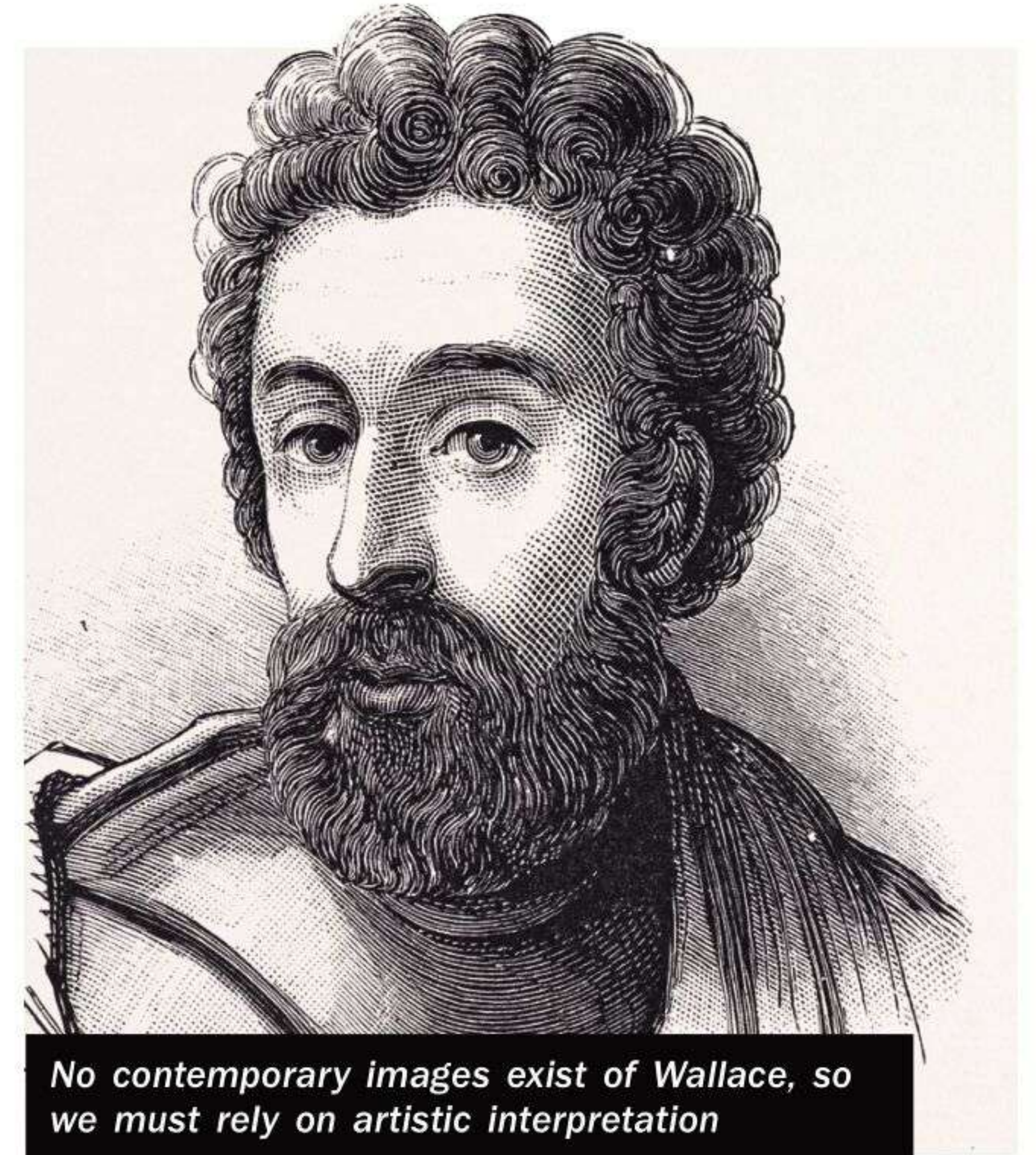
The Earl of Surrey clearly despised the Scottish army and its leaders. Remembering the previous year, he expected them to submit or melt away. He rose late from bed and called back some of his vanguard who had already crossed Stirling Bridge. The earl then knighted some of his followers and sent the envoys to offer mercy to the Scots. Finally, he made ready to move. At a council of war, a Scottish knight in his army warned Surrey. "If we cross

the bridge, we are dead men. For we cannot cross except two by two. Our enemies are in the open and their whole force will fall upon us." He offered to lead a force across a ford upstream and outflank the Scots but the treasurer Cressingham, "a pompous man," rejected this plan and demanded an immediate advance across the bridge to end the war and save money. The delays had given Moray and Wallace time to lead their men onto the low ground north of the bridge and form them up for battle. When, at 11am, the English vanguard began to file across the narrow bridge, the Scots were ready.

Stirling Bridge must have been choked with men and horses moving to the north side of the river. Wallace and Moray waited for the best moment. When about a third of the English army was across, they struck. The



This frieze in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, with William Wallace in the front row, shows many notable figures from the First War of Scottish Independence



No contemporary images exist of Wallace, so we must rely on artistic interpretation

Scottish spearmen surged forward, making their strongest attack against the north end of the bridge. The English vanguard did not have time to form up and were pushed back at once. The bitterest fighting was probably for control of the bridge and causeway where many were thrown into the river and drowned. Once the Scots secured this, the English who had already crossed were cut off from the main body of the army.

With the end of the bridge held by the enemy, the Earl of Surrey could only watch in horror as his vanguard met its fate on the far bank of the Forth. Though one English knight, Marmaduke Tweng, managed to force his way back across the bridge, carrying his wounded nephew to safety, his comrades were penned into a loop of the river. Some unarmoured Welsh bowmen escaped by swimming, but the heavily equipped men at arms faced drowning or death in battle. Outnumbered, they were cut down by the triumphant Scots. Among the dead was Cressingham, whose body was skinned to make trophies. Having seen the fate of his army, Surrey's nerve cracked. He fled the field and rode south to Berwick. Behind him, Stirling Castle and much of southern Scotland surrendered to the victors. However, the Scottish army had suffered losses in the fighting. Andrew Moray was wounded and, though he survived for several months, by the end of the year the daring northern leader was dead. The rebellion had recovered

Scotland and it also created an army. William Wallace was now its commander, and after Moray's death was named sole guardian of the kingdom. Through the winter he continued to train the army and ready Scotland for the coming storm. Upon hearing the news of Stirling Bridge, Edward I returned to England to prepare his revenge. By late June he was on the border at the head of a massive army of some 20,000 foot and more than 2,000 armoured cavalry. In the face of this huge host, Wallace initially avoided contact. He probably hoped that the problems of keeping so many men and horses fed would cause Edward major difficulties as he advanced. However, just as it seemed the English army would break up, Wallace decided to fight. As a leader whose power derived not from his rank but from his leadership, he may have felt the need to demonstrate his ability to defend Scotland, but his decision was disastrous. On 22 July, he formed his spearmen in tightly packed blocks called schiltroms. Though the few Scots cavalry fled, Wallace's schiltroms repulsed the initial charges of Edward's knights. The king was not panicked, however, and brought forward his archers to bombard the Scots spearmen. As their ranks thinned, Edward sent in his cavalry, and his forces ground the Scottish army down until it broke. Thousands of Scots were killed in the bloodiest battle of the wars. Wallace escaped but the army that he and Moray had built was destroyed.

Despite the disaster at Falkirk, there was no collapse of resistance to Edward. The rebels of 1297 had shown both belief in Scotland's independence and the way to fight a powerful foe, but Wallace's role as leader of the resistance ended at Falkirk. He resigned his guardianship and by 1299 had left Scotland. However, Wallace had not abandoned the struggle. He visited the court of the French king and possibly the pope, aiding in efforts to win their support for the Scottish cause. By 1303, he was back in his homeland and on the battlefield, but after six years of war, the Scots faced defeat once again. As the leader of a small band, Wallace continued to fight on after the surrender of the last Scottish stronghold, Stirling Castle, in 1304. Edward, not known for his merciful character, was implacable towards his enemy and insisted that Wallace be taken without any promises of forgiveness.

In August 1305, Wallace was hunted down and captured near Glasgow by the Scottish lord John de Menteith, who was rewarded for his efforts. The time had come for King Edward to exact revenge on his most hated enemy. Wallace was tried at Westminster Hall where he denied the accusations of treason, reasoning that he had never once sworn allegiance to the English king. But the verdict was cast before the trial had even begun. Wallace was condemned to a traitor's death at Smithfield, London, in September 1305 where he was hanged, drawn and quartered. The head of the Scottish hero was impaled on a spike above London Bridge.

If Edward thought this marked the end of opposition, however, he was wrong. Six months later the Scots would revolt once again. By leading their men to victory at Stirling Bridge, William Wallace and Andrew Moray had reignited Scotland's cause and begun its fight for renewed independence; a fight they would eventually win.



A 1624 portrait of Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS

His military prowess earned him the title ‘Lion of the North’
– and with very good reason

Words by: Derek Wilson



Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632) was the eldest son of the Swedish King Charles IX of the royal house of Vasa. All his adult life was destined to be devoted to warfare. As a result he changed the status of his nation and made it one of the major players in the political life of Europe.

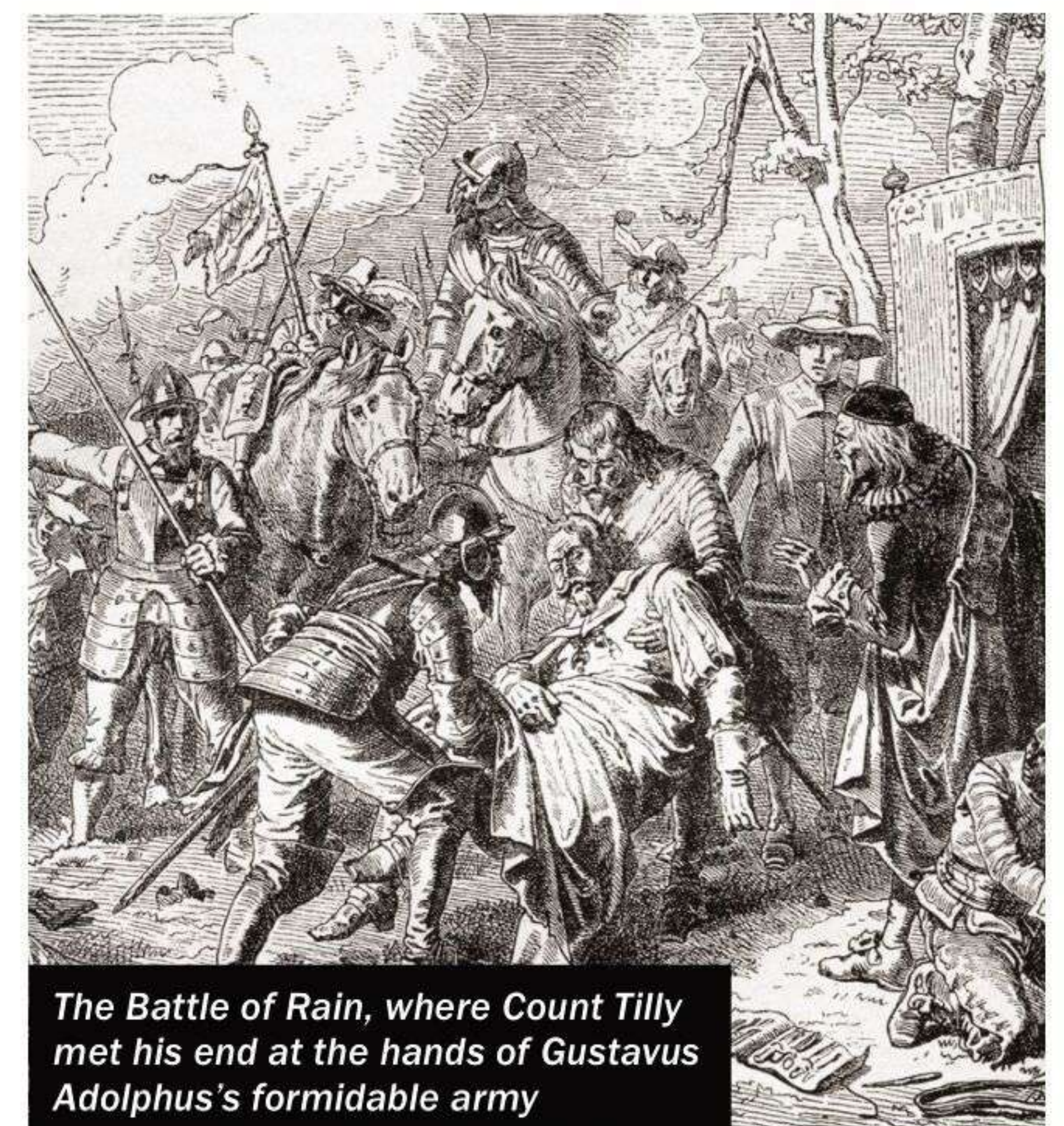
When he came to the throne at the age of 16, Sweden was a northern state in competition with its neighbours for political and economic supremacy in Scandinavia and around the Baltic littoral. When he died, just 16 years later, Sweden was shaping the destiny of the continent. There were three major reasons for his success: he was a devout Lutheran who believed in the justice of his cause; he was a brilliant military strategist and tactician; and he had the support, as chief minister, of Axel Oxenstierna, a clever and industrious politician who took care of the government at home while the king was absent on campaign.

Sweden’s weak economic position was the result of geography. Its only trade outlets to the wider world lay via a narrow sea channel on the west, largely dominated by Denmark and the northern Baltic ports of Narva, Reval, Riga

and Danzig controlled by Poland. The nation had valuable bulk exports to exploit – timber, iron, copper – and needed access to foreign markets. Gustavus inherited a war with Poland, whose king, Sigismund III, had a claim to the Swedish crown. This ended in an unsatisfactory settlement (The Peace of Knäred) in 1613 but Gustavus was not prepared to let matters rest there. He was determined to escape from Sweden’s geopolitical confines. He first turned his attention eastwards to the Gulf of Finland where Russian control was currently weakened by internal political problems. A war ending in 1617 brought him the provinces of Karelia and Ingria, which effectively closed the Baltic to Russian shipping. Gustavus was now ready to resume his struggle with Poland. The new war lasted 12 years but by the end of it Gustavus had wrested from Poland the provinces of Estonia and Livonia with an important stretch of Baltic coastline.

The young king learned quickly the military lessons of these early campaigns and it was in bringing a fresh mind to the conduct of warfare that his main strength lay. Gustavus’s major innovations were in technology and battlefield tactics. Both combined to make his

armies more mobile and versatile. He replaced the standard, heavy cannon with lightweight, mobile ordnance that enabled his troops to move easily and respond rapidly to changing circumstances. He also developed a large and more mobile navy to keep his land forces ‘fed’ with all the supplies they needed. By this means he actually changed the constraints of Sweden’s geographical position to its advantage. By establishing complete control



The Battle of Rain, where Count Tilly met his end at the hands of Gustavus Adolphus’s formidable army



An anonymous portrait of Gustavus Adolphus in armour

of the Baltic he could use his enlarged fleet to move men and munitions rapidly to any point on the coast. For example, in 1630 when invading Germany, he conveyed his army to the Baltic coast at Peenemünde (notorious, 300 years later, for the development of long-range rockets by Hitler's war machine) in 25 warships, then used 100 smaller vessels to land them swiftly and efficiently on the coast. Once the army moved inland the navy was invaluable in keeping the lines of communication open.

As a battlefield tactician Gustavus's approach was nothing short of revolutionary. The conventional deployment of forces was based on massed infantry supported by cavalry wings. The new Swedish model was organised around smaller, integrated units of infantry, cavalry and artillery enjoying greater flexibility to respond to rapidly changing situations. As commander, Gustavus could move these units quickly and so establish control of the ground.

Training his officers and men to learn and operate his unfamiliar tactics necessitated strict discipline. The ability to maintain firm control was another of Gustavus's strengths. He was a deeply committed Lutheran and he imposed high ethical standards. Looting and plundering were standard practices for 17th century armies, particularly mercenary armies. The Swedish king laid down strict rules and punishments regarding the ill treatment of non-combatants. Clever and imaginative as Gustavus was, his greatest asset was his personality. He led from the front, inspired his followers and garnered the respect of his opponents. It was this Lion of the North who

single-handedly changed the whole course of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48).

This, the most devastating conflict central Europe had ever experienced, began as an attempt by the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, to reunite his vast dominions and bring them all back within the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. The territory over which

Ferdinand 'ruled' was divided into more than 300 semi-independent principalities, free cities and ecclesiastical estates. Originally, the empire had been in league with the papacy as a powerful politico-religious force but in the century since the start of the Reformation (1517), many states had adopted Protestantism and some 40 per cent of the emperor's

DEATH OF A CITY

How the city of Magdeburg was completely decimated by the senseless actions of Tilly's invaders

Magdeburg, founded in 805, was a flourishing city and home to 30,000 people at the beginning of May 1631. At the end of May 1631, a few hundred citizens survived among a smouldering pile of rubble. Count Tilly had arrived eager to capture this important centre for his imperial master but Magdeburg refused to surrender. Its Protestant majority hoped that Gustavus Adolphus would come to their aid but he was still busy at Frankfurt-on-Oder and could only send one of his officers to stiffen the people's resistance. Tilly's desperate and hungry men knew they had to break in before the Swedes arrived. On 17 May they began a fierce artillery bombardment. It was dawn on 20 May before a breach was made large enough for the desperate invaders to pour through. The defenders put up a good fight but were powerless to stop an orgy of killing, brutality, plunder and destruction on a scale that shocked the whole of Europe. Tilly's troops swept through the city, completely out of control. They broke into wine cellars and rapidly got drunk. Now they were not only savage beasts; they were drunk savage beasts, slaughtering every cowering man, woman or child they came across. Tilly did what he could to alleviate the suffering.

He had 600 women and children herded into the cathedral and placed a guard on the doors. Worse was to follow, though. At the beginning of the onslaught, they had set fire to one of the city gates to stop it being closed again. Windblown sparks carried to the thatched roofs and timber-framed houses of the crammed streets. Beautiful Magdeburg was soon in flames. The pile of smouldering ash took days to cool down and when it did the gaunt, blackened walls of the cathedral and a handful of other churches and public buildings stood like tombstones. Tilly, soon being known as the 'Butcher of Magdeburg', had no control over the situation. He ordered the surviving citizens to be lodged in the roofless cloister of a ruined monastery. There they huddled under blankets and, one by one, died of starvation. This added the threat of disease to the hardships of the imperial troops. They simply could not cope with the enormous number of burials. Eventually Tilly ordered all the remaining corpses to be thrown into the Elbe. For months afterwards the river was choked with putrid bodies. It was well into the next century before Magdeburg was restored to anything approaching its former splendour.



Magdeburg was burnt to the ground and any residents that survived the fire later died of starvation



“MAGDEBURG WAS SUBJECTED TO THE WORST ORGY OF PILLAGE AND DESTRUCTION IMAGINABLE BY ANGRY AND HUNGRY TROOPS”

subject were now Lutheran or Calvinist. It was this situation that Ferdinand II set himself to redress. From his base in Vienna and with the help of his Habsburg kinsman, the king of Spain, he launched a series of wars and, by 1630, had enjoyed considerable success throughout Germany. But he had also roused alarm and suspicion. Protestant states such as the United Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, England and Scotland feared a Catholic crusade. And Catholic France faced the prospect of being ringed by Habsburg territory. This was the point at which Gustavus Adolphus intervened – and intervened dramatically.

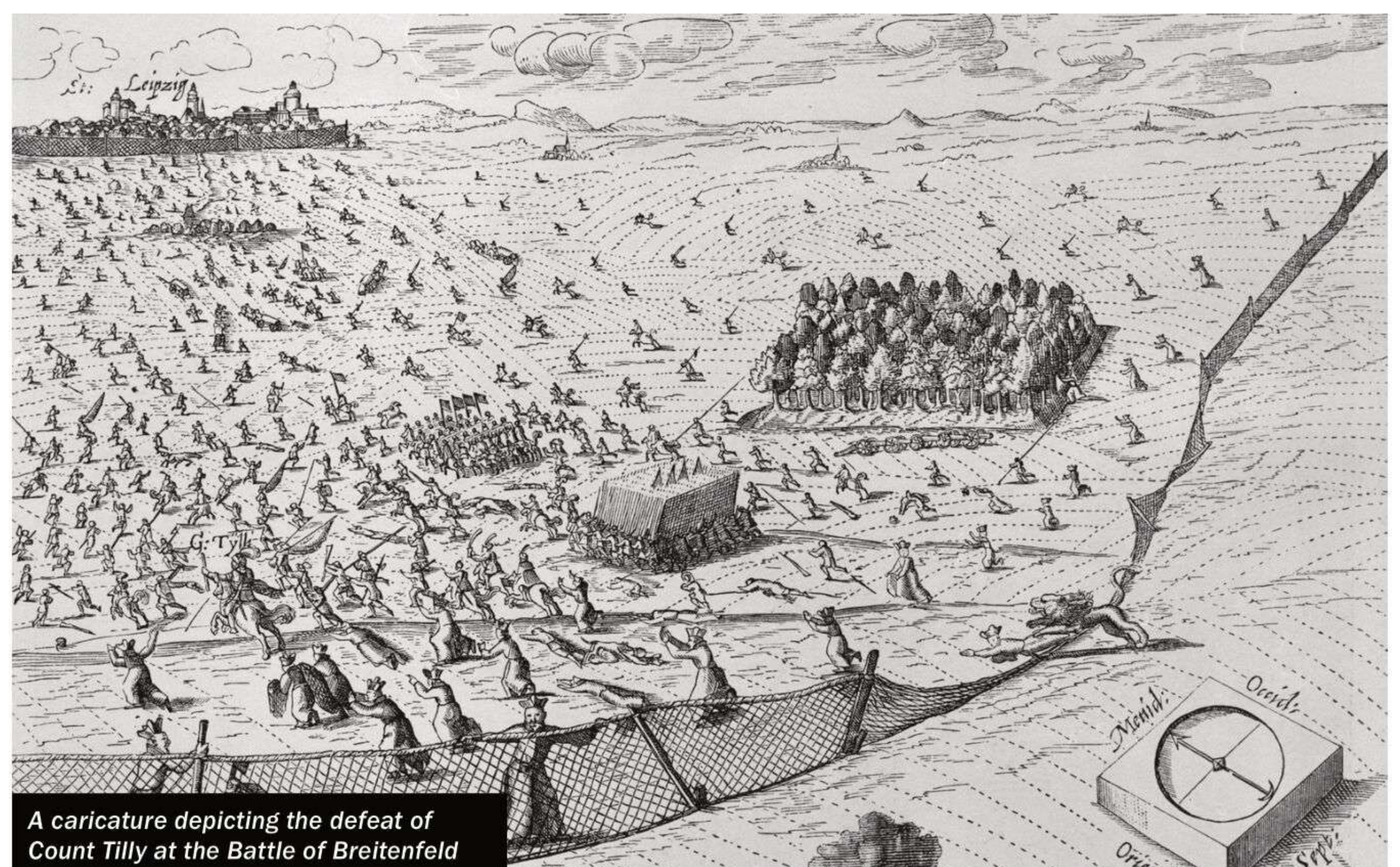
When he landed his army at Peenemünde his immediate objective was to prevent the Emperor Ferdinand gaining control of a substantial part of the Baltic coastline. He intended, he said, “to clip the wings of the Imperialists so that they shall not fly again”. However, there was more at stake. Ferdinand II was a friend and supporter of Sigismund III, the Polish king who was smarting for revenge. There could be no doubt that once he had secured a base on the Baltic, the emperor would support an attack on Sweden with the intention of placing Sigismund on the throne. It is also a fact that, for both sides, religion was a dominant factor in their strategy. Ferdinand, ardently Catholic, believed himself to have a mission to extend papal authority over all those ‘heretical’ lands that had rejected it. Gustavus, similarly, was earnest about his

faith. He was not defending his own crown; he was entering the fray as a Protestant champion, fighting for the right of all Protestants to avoid papal domination. Therefore, just as imperial military success had carried Ferdinand’s armies steadily northwards, so reversing that advance would inevitably carry the Swedish army inexorably southwards towards the very heart of the empire.

When Gustavus went ashore in north Germany his arrival did not set the imperialist top brass quaking in their boots. The Catholic League of imperial princes contributing to

Ferdinand’s army had become accustomed to military success and was led by the very able Jean t’Serclaes, Count of Tilly, who felt more than able to deal with this latest threat. For their part, the Protestant leaders of North Germany were not falling over backwards to welcome Gustavus as their saviour. They knew full well the reprisals that would follow their treason against the emperor if Gustavus was defeated. Also, they did not welcome the prospect of having foreign troops billeted on their people. The only major asset Gustavus had was the support of France. Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister of Louis XIII, wanted to curb Habsburg power without becoming militarily involved in the war. He therefore gave Gustavus financial backing. The two armies moved towards each other in the spring of 1631 – but in slow motion. Both commanders had to fight their way forward against opposition that impeded their advance. Gustavus spent time overwhelming imperial garrisons at Küstrin and Frankfurt-on-Oder. Tilly was involved in the siege of the staunchly Lutheran city of Magdeburg. Strategic stalemate was a disaster in 17th century warfare. Armies had to be fed. When they ran short of food they became difficult to control. Gustavus was halted at Frankfurt by the reluctant support of his allies. Tilly was 240 kilometres (150 miles) away, balked by the stubborn resistance of Magdeburg. Not until 20 May did Magdeburg fall. Then it was subjected to the worst orgy of pillage and destruction imaginable by angry and hungry imperial troops. Ironically, the savagery of Tilly’s men tipped the scales in favour of his enemy. When news of imperialist atrocities spread, hesitant Protestant leaders turned to the Swedish king for support.

Gustavus’s army, now enlarged by fresh German contingents, finally encountered the





The Battle of Breitenfeld as painted by Pieter Snyders

enemy on 17 September at Breitenfeld, a village to the north of Leipzig. The Swedish king was in command of 23,000 battle-hardened veterans plus 18,000 less experienced Saxon recruits. Tilly's force totalled 31,000 men who had recently gone through the wearying Magdeburg siege. Gustavus also enjoyed artillery supremacy. He had 51 traditional battlefield cannon (as opposed to Tilly's 27) plus an array of the new smaller, more mobile guns. The numerical difference might not, of itself, have been decisive. What added to Tilly's problems was that he was faced with a totally unfamiliar battle formation. Instead of a stolid mass of infantry flanked by cavalry, he saw that the Swedish king had arranged his cavalry in squares. Between them he had placed files of musketeers. The latter stood in files of five, one behind another. The front man adopted a kneeling position so that he and the soldier behind could fire simultaneously. As soon as they had discharged their weapons they retreated to the back of the column to reload and the next pair took their places. The Swedes were thus able to keep up an unrelenting fire, while the loose cavalry formation allowed the horsemen greater freedom of movement than the conventional line abreast. Any damage done by enemy cannon did not open up a serious breach in their ranks. Tilly's cavalry charged and charged again. His artillery pounded the Swedish ranks. But Gustavus's men stood their ground. When gaps were opened in their ranks their flexible formation meant that they were quickly filled. Eventually the imperialists broke themselves against the rock-like Swedish



A portrait of Gustavus Adolphus on horseback at the Battle of Breitenfeld in 1631

squares. The Swede's Saxon allies were driven from the field but the imperialists were unable to create a tactical advantage. As the day lengthened it seemed that nothing could break the stalemate. Then the wind changed and strengthened. It blew clouds of choking dust into the faces of Tilly's weary troops. Blinded and confused by the fog-like haze, they faltered and, at last, turned to flee. They left 7,600 comrades dead on the battlefield and more were cut down as they fled. The victors were left to pick up 8,000 prisoners, all the imperial artillery and the baggage train. The defeat had

cost Tilly two-thirds of his army in less than two hours of actual fighting.

Those two hours changed the course of European history. The Catholic League was forced back into its own heartland of Bavaria and Austria. Their fight to regain northern Germany was over. But what was Gustavus Adolphus to do next? After wintering in Bohemia the Lion of the North was on the march again and boasting that, within weeks, he would be in command of Vienna. Nuremberg, Ingolstadt, Augsburg and Munich had opened their gates to him. Tilly made one more attempt to stop

'THE GREATEST MAN OF THE CENTURY'?

Much can – and should – be made of Gustavus's achievements, but let's not forget the role of his right-hand man

The achievements of Gustavus Adolphus would not have been possible if he had not had the backing, the advice and the administrative skill of Axel Oxenstierna, Count of Södermöre (1583-1654). He was born into a Swedish noble family whose members had been at the centre of Swedish affairs for generations. His education and upbringing followed the conventional pattern of young men who expected to become owners of large estates, members of the royal court and participants in government. By his early twenties he was a member of King Charles IX's privy chamber and had also experienced his first diplomatic mission. There was, apparently, nothing to set him apart from other loyal officers of the crown. However, Charles IX recognised the young man's talent and when the king died in 1611, his successor, Gustavus, made Oxenstierna his chief adviser, the Lord High Chancellor. Thus, before the age of 30, Oxenstierna was framing national policy and heading up the state administration. Since Gustavus spent much of his reign on active military campaign, this meant that his chief minister really 'ran Sweden'.

What qualities suited him to this role and why was he so successful? Firstly, he was a pragmatist. Gustavus recognised Oxenstierna as 'cool' to his 'hot'. The young king could be headstrong and his minister had the knack of being able to explain what was and what was not possible. Secondly, Oxenstierna was hard working. His royal master entered into wars with Denmark, Poland, Russia and the Holy Roman Empire. Someone had to ensure that the king had the money and other resources necessary for these great projects. That someone was Oxenstierna. Thirdly the chancellor was an administrative genius. He clearly saw when reforms



were necessary to make the work of government more efficient. It was not just the king who was impressed by Oxenstierna's abilities. The brilliant French statesman, Cardinal Richelieu, complimented the Swedish minister as being a source of sound advice. Pope Urban VIII in distant Rome called this 'heretical' Lutheran one of the most excellent men in the world. And it was the great Dutch jurist and philosopher, Hugo Grotius, one of the most original thinkers of the age, who acknowledged Axel Oxenstierna as "the greatest man of the century".

the Swedish juggernaut. He stationed his army on the banks of the River Lech near its junction with the Danube but, under cover of a relentless artillery bombardment, Gustavus built a bridge and smashed his way through the imperial ranks. This time Count Tilly was among the dead.

In his desperation Ferdinand II turned for help to an independent warlord, Albrecht Wenzel von Wallenstein. This ruthless, self-serving mercenary had been responsible for many of the early imperialist gains before his outrageous behaviour had obliged the emperor to sack him. Now Ferdinand was forced to go cap in hand to Wallenstein. The restored general fought a defensive campaign, holing up in a strong defensive position and luring Gustavus into a series of fruitless assaults throughout the autumn of 1632. Then he dismissed his men into winter quarters. But, once again, Gustavus refused to play by the rules. Instead of resting his troops during the winter, he attacked Wallenstein's headquarters at Lützen, to the south west of Leipzig. In a

replay of Breitenfeld the mercenary general threw his men, time and again, at the Swedish position. Then, as dusk and mist obscured the battlefield, he fled leaving his artillery, his baggage train and another 6,000 dead soldiers. But Wallenstein did have one consolation prize. He learned later that King Gustavus Adolphus was among the Swedish fatalities, killed after becoming separated from his troops while leading a cavalry charge. In the aftermath Ferdinand regained much of the ground that had been lost. But the German states were exhausted – and in many cases, devastated. Wallenstein overplayed his arrogant hand. In 1634 he was assassinated – by an agent in the pay of the emperor.

The Thirty Years' War entered a new phase, and became largely a contest between France and the Habsburg states. Sweden's participation was limited and primarily concerned with securing the gains made during the war. In this process the major role was played by Axel Oxenstierna. Treaties with North German states ensured a Protestant buffer

zone. The Baltic became a Swedish lake and, by 1648, Sweden had added new territories on the southern coastline.

Remarkable as Gustavus Adolphus was, we should not be dazzled into attributing major historical change in Europe solely to success on the battlefield. Sweden attained and sustained its position by wise economic strategies pursued by the king and carried to completion by his no less accomplished Lord High Chancellor. The economic revolution that fed the war machine established new foundries and factories which, in turn, were made possible by loans from Amsterdam bankers. Nor should we forget the thousands of lives lost in Gustavus Adolphus's 'glittering' campaigns. In the space of a couple of years his army destroyed 1,500 German towns, 18,000 villages and 2,000 castles. Battles are organised by generals, but who are the real heroes?



Count Tilly, Gustavus's foe



This portrait of the Swedish king hangs in Sweden's National Museum

"WHEN GAPS WERE OPENED IN THEIR RANKS THEIR FLEXIBLE FORMATION MEANT THAT THEY WERE QUICKLY FILLED"



His Excellency John, Duke of Marlborough, Marquis of Blandford, Earl of Marlborough, Baron Churchill, of Sandridge and Baron Churchill of Nymouth, Captain General of all Her Majesty's Forces, Master General of the Ordnance, One of y^e Lords of Her Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, and Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter. Her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary, and Plenipotentiary to the States General of the United Provinces and General of the Confederate Armies

JOHN CHURCHILL

1ST DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

How the soldier-statesman set an example of excellence and British military might that inspired his most famous descendant of all – Winston Churchill



The liberty of the British Isles is under threat from tyranny in Europe. The country knows it can't survive alone – it needs friends to form a mighty alliance.

Churchill needs to act quickly and with great cunning to secure the relationships that will save the entire continent. His actions at this crucial stage will transform him into one of Britain's greatest war heroes.

You might be forgiven for assuming this sorry scene took place in 1940, in the earliest stages of World War II. However, it's 1702, the conflict is the War of Spanish Succession and the Churchill in question is actually John, 1st Duke of Marlborough. He was a man whose life would mirror and later inspire one of the most famous Britons in history. Churchill's hero worship of John did not simply come from their shared bloodline – it was also down to a very intimate understanding of the pressures placed upon him.



Sarah Churchill was an incredibly influential figure, especially due to her relationship with Queen Anne

John Churchill was born the son of (another) Winston Churchill, a Member of Parliament who had made the unfortunate decision to fight on the losing side of the English Civil War. Supporting the Cavaliers had cost him dearly and left his large family impoverished. It is believed that the Churchill family motto 'Faithful but Unfortunate' arose from this era. However, their fortunes did improve after the Restoration in 1660, and the young John served as a page to the duke of York – the future James II.

Like his famous descendant, John was a very intelligent young man who found a calling in military service. Just as Winston would join the British Army, John set his heart on becoming a soldier and joined the Grenadier Guards in 1667. His military journey saw him serve in the Franco-Dutch War in 1672, when he was promoted to the rank of captain. He went on to gain a commendation at the Siege of Maastricht where he saved the duke of Monmouth's life – a deed that allegedly earned praise from the French king, Louis XIV.

His illustrious career and military acumen ensured that he rose rapidly through the ranks. He was respected by the higher-ups and his courage had also earned him the admiration of the common soldiers. This is not dissimilar to the attention Winston received for his military career and his accounts of the battles he witnessed. Both men were propelled to relative stardom at a young age, and both would feel the resulting pressure and expectation.

Winston's similarities to John did not end on the battlefield. When John returned to Saint James's Palace, his affections were drawn to the young Sarah Jennings, a beautiful attendant to Princess Anne. Her family had been impoverished by debts and she was hardly the most obvious or appealing prospect

for the eligible war hero. Nonetheless, John was besotted. His father wished him to marry a wealthier woman to ease the family debts – but John chose love.

It is clear to see why Winston would feel an affinity for John's decision. After all, he too married for love. His future wife, Clementine Hozier, was the subject of public scrutiny, her true parentage unknown, as her parents divorced and her supposed father abandoned her. Her family sank down the social ladder and were forced to move home. Despite her past, Winston was captivated by Clementine.

Society doubted the staying power of their relationship – a daughter of divorce and a wild military man – but their union lasted 57 years. The marriages of Winston and John were remarkably similar as both men found their match in strong-willed and remarkably loyal women, who stayed by their sides until death.

Like Winston, John was not fated to spend his whole life on the battlefield – politics held some appeal to both men. Upon the ascension of James II, John was appointed lieutenant general, effectively commander-in-chief, as well as peer of the realm. However, England was in the middle of religious rebellion and as one was defeated, another emerged. In theory, John was loyal to James II but he grew uneasy about the king's Catholic leanings, apparently declaring that should the monarch attempt to change his religion, "I will instantly quit his service." He was not the only one with misgivings about James' beliefs, and in 1688, the so-called Glorious Revolution broke out with the goal of unseating the sovereign. John's ruthlessness could be seen in full force as he abandoned his king, siding instead with William of Orange and thereby securing James' defeat. It was a political move of calculated coldness.

CHURCHILL ON CHURCHILL

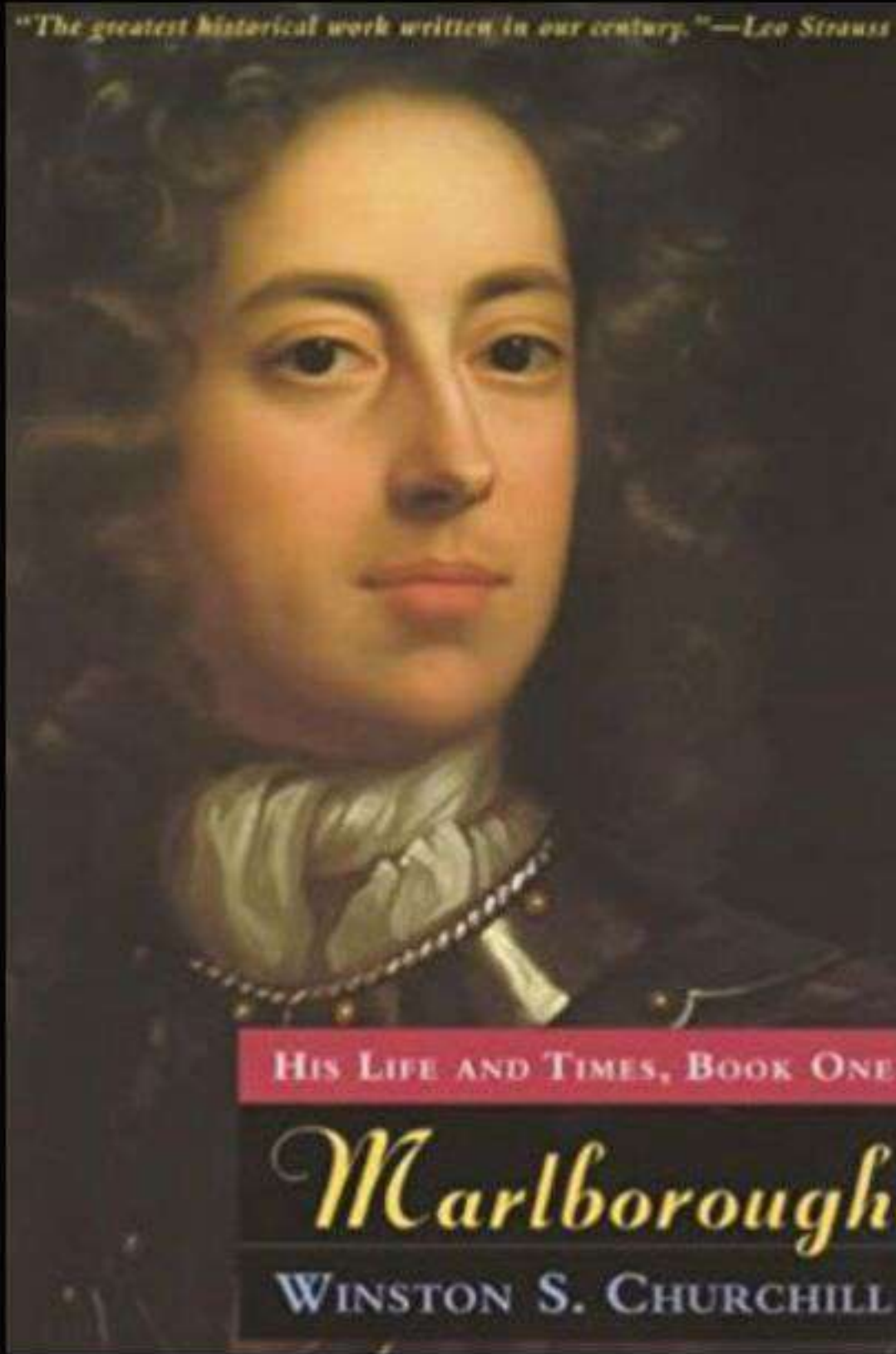
How Winston poured his admiration into arguably his finest literary work

It's no surprise that Winston was inspired by and proud of his famous ancestor, John. He admired both his keen military strategy and also clever diplomacy – two things Winston himself held in very high regard. The idea of an ancestor who never fought a battle he didn't win was inspirational for Winston, and it was this excellent success rate that he wished to replicate in his own military and diplomatic careers. Although they were both from aristocratic backgrounds, the two men were never ones to rest on their laurels and live an entitled lifestyle. They both became heroes in the eyes of the people, so it is easy to see why Winston empathised with his ancestor so dearly.

Although John was respected for his military victories, previous biographers had painted him in an unfavourable light – most notably Thomas Macaulay, writing some 100 years earlier than Winston. Macaulay's work seemed to criticise John's switch of loyalties from James II to William of Orange, painting him in a selfish, villainous light. This opinion was not uncommon, and part of Winston's motivation to tell his own version of John's story was to refute this dastardly image. Winston's biography of his ancestor, *Marlborough: His Life and Times* spanned four volumes and the first was published in 1933. In the preface Winston stated, "It is my hope to recall this great shade from the past, and not only invest him with his panoply, but make him living and intimate to modern eyes."

We can see how dedicated he was to this biography, as he allegedly wrote over 300 letters to people, requesting opinions about his work in progress. This was Winston's labour of love for a man he admired greatly. As expected, the books countered the image presented by Macaulay. They aimed to attribute good and pure reasons to John's changing of sides, such as religious, moral and patriotic motivations. While Winston's work is expertly written and researched, the fact that John deserted a man to whom he owed almost everything is hard to paint over.

Some critics of Winston's work claim that he paints Louis XIV with the same villainous brush that John had once been tarred with. However, the fact remains that, as well written as it is, Winston was still writing about his personal hero. Some level of bias was bound to seep into his work as a result. Nevertheless, the finished product was well received by critics, with Roy Jenkins calling it a "revelation" and political philosopher Leo Strauss dubbing it the greatest historical work of the 20th century.



Blenheim Palace became the home of the Churchill family for the following three centuries

John's stark resolve and overriding self-belief were not dissimilar to traits displayed by Winston himself. However, Winston was an immensely loyal man, something John was far from. John initially benefited from his shrewd move, such as being bestowed the earldom of Marlborough by William and Mary and being given command in Flanders and Ireland between 1689 and 1691. However, the new king couldn't trust a man who would betray his own monarch so easily.

Although John kept inflicting defeats on his enemies, his popularity plummeted and he was thrown into the Tower of London in 1692 on suspicion of trying to restore James II. He was released but the event sent Winston a powerful message – loyalty is one of the most important weapons in the political arsenal. Thankfully,



Marlborough's string of victories and force of will elevated Britain to a power to be reckoned with

a chance was coming for John to redeem himself. In 1700, after the death of Spain's King Charles II, Europe scrambled for control of the Spanish empire. Louis XIV was close to uniting Spain and France. For England, the Holy Roman Empire and the Dutch Republic, this was unacceptable.

As much as William distrusted John, he couldn't deny that he was best suited to the role of creating a powerful coalition capable of toppling the might of the French crown. William, however, would not live to see the war run its course and when he died in March 1702, John played the part Winston would later find himself in – mounting a war effort against a threat to the British Isles.

Although John had the command he desired, he still struggled to gain the trust of the House of Commons, which was divided on where the attack should be concentrated. It proved a valuable lesson for Winston, who consolidated both his military and domestic leadership of Parliament when he was appointed prime minister.

However, one of John's most valuable lessons to Winston was the importance of friendships with allies in the midst of war. The duke formed strong friendships with Queen Anne, Robert Harley, the speaker of the House of Commons and the High Treasurer Lord Godolphin, all of whom he used to influence and gain favour where possible. Winston described these friendships as "the crucible from which the power and glory of England were soon to rise, gleaming among nations". In fact, the idea of friendship became so important to him that he used it to measure all historical figures. The most important friendship for John was with Prince Eugene of Savoy, general of the Holy Roman Empire's Imperial Army. John and Eugene were like two peas in a pod as they both held immense control and influence

MARLBOROUGH'S FINEST HOUR

How John defeated the 'invincible' army of Louis XIV at Blenheim

01 STORM OF LEAD

For his diversionary attack on the village of Blenheim, Marlborough gives Lt Gen John Cutts 20 infantry battalions and 15 cavalry squadrons. At 1pm, Cutts' six lines of soldiers advance with little cover, having to endure punishment not only from hundreds of concealed musketeers, but also from a battery of four 24-pounders adjacent to the village. One-third of Rowe's brigade is either killed or wounded in the near-suicidal attack.

02 GREAT BATTERY

Prince Eugene's attack is spearheaded by Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau's Prussians. A Bavarian 'great battery' of 16 guns wreaks havoc on the Prussians, and a counterattack by Bavarian infantry led by Marshal Count Jean Baptist d'Arco drives them across the Nebel. The Prussians lose ten colours in the failed attack.

03 PUT TO FLIGHT

French morale plummets when the mounted French Gens d'Armes are defeated by a smaller force of English cavalry. "What? Is it possible? The Gentlemen of France fleeing?" remarks Bavarian Elector Maximilian-Emmanuel, who watched the shocking defeat. Tallard later said the attack was the first indication that his army might lose the battle.

04 DANGEROUS CROSSING

As Marlborough prepares for his main attack on the middle of the enemy position, allied infantry crosses the Nebel and furnishes protective fire for cavalymen who have dismounted to lead their horses over the stream.

05 OUTWITTED COMMANDER

Lt Gen Marquis Philippe de Clérambault, the commander of the French infantry posted at Blenheim, crams so many musketeers inside the village that there is no space on the perimeter for many of them to fire at the enemy.

06 MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Unfortunately for the Franco-Bavarian army, Ferdinand, comte de Marsin, fails to see that if he sent a column of infantry and cavalry north from Oberglau to exploit the rout of the Prince Holstein-Beck's Dutch infantry, he might split the two wings of the allied army and set the stage for a French victory.

07 COVERING FIRE

After Marlborough's brother, Lt Gen Charles Churchill, and his assault force crosses the Nebel, the cavalry moves in front of the infantry. The infantry battalions leave gaps in their lines so that the cavalry can fall back and reform behind them unhindered.

08 UNMATCHED FIREPOWER

Lt Gen Charles Churchill's 18 infantry battalions easily outgun the nine French battalions they encounter on open ground south of the Nebel. The allied infantry enjoy greater firepower because it uses platoon firing, by which platoons fire successively in groups, so that a steady fire is maintained without pause. In contrast, the French line fires in unison with a pause to reload.

ALLIES

infantry
cavalry

FRENCH

infantry
cavalry



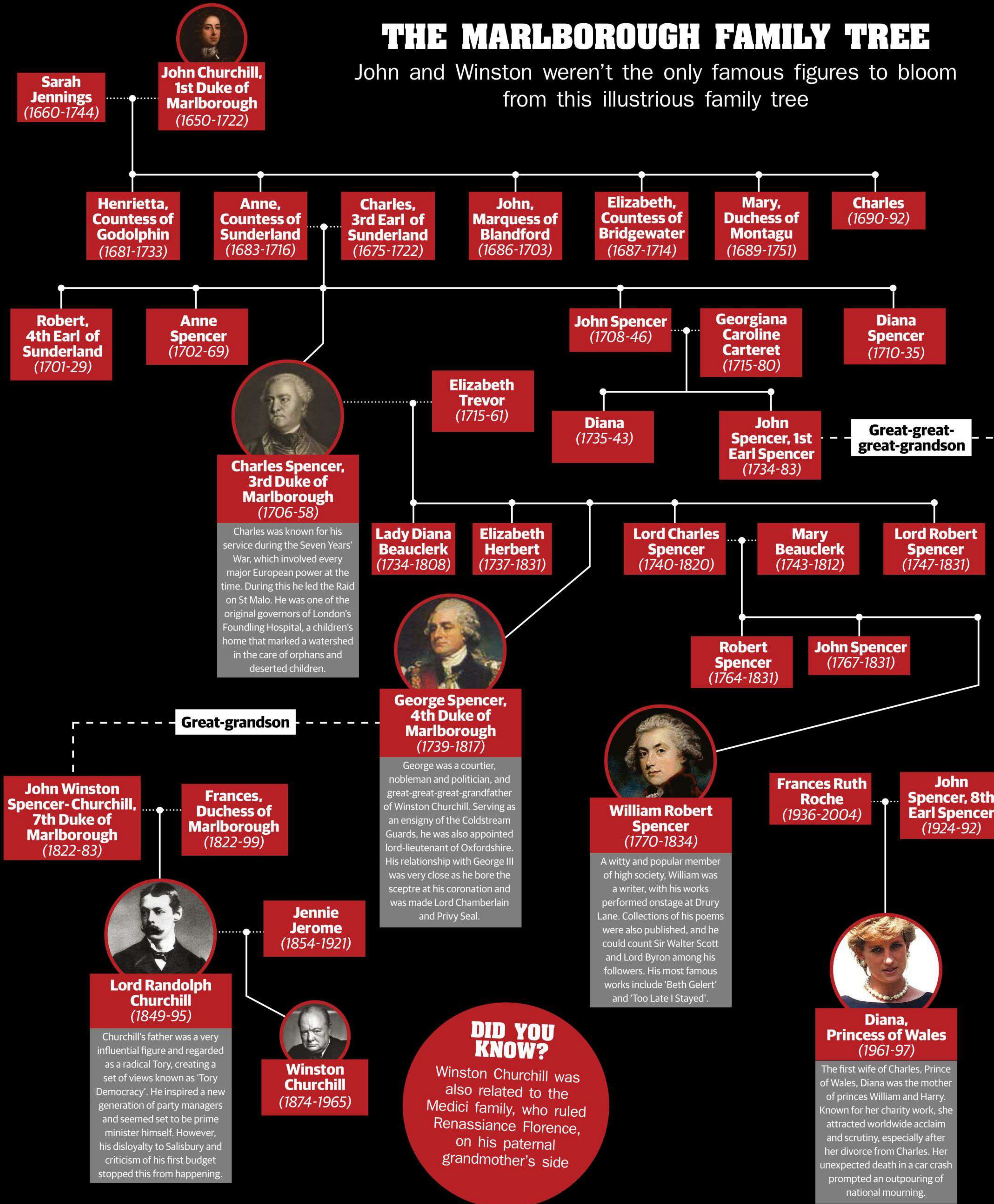
"ALTHOUGH JOHN KEPT INFLECTING DEFEATS ON HIS ENEMIES, HIS POPULARITY PLUMMETED AND HE WAS THROWN INTO THE TOWER OF LONDON IN 1692"



The defeat at Blenheim cost the French 38,000 casualties and changed the course of the war

THE MARLBOROUGH FAMILY TREE

John and Winston weren't the only famous figures to bloom from this illustrious family tree





Britain was embroiled in the War of the Spanish Succession for the entirety of Queen Anne's reign

over their armies and each understood how important the alliance would be to defeating France. It also helped, of course, that they were both remarkably talented military commanders. Combined, they were unstoppable. The friendship and close bond between the two men meant that their armies acted as a united force.

John, with the help of Eugene, enjoyed victory after victory. At Blenheim, the dynamic duo delivered a crushing defeat to their French and Bavarian foes, turning the tide of the war in their favour. This victory owed a great deal of thanks to the synergy between the different forces which came together to deliver the blow. Winston wrote that Eugene and John acted as “two lobes of the same brain... in constant touch with each other”. There is no doubt that he would have remembered this important example during World War II when he, too, formed a very close connection with a powerful ally – Franklin D Roosevelt, the President of the United States.

The President and Prime Minister, despite the occasional disagreement, shared a close personal rapport, communicated frequently, and both understood the threat of the Axis Powers. For many historians, this friendship was one of the crucial factors that helped the Allies withstand the Nazi threat and win WWII.

John Churchill continued to humiliate his enemies, and win conflicts for his nation. He was immensely knowledgeable and resourceful, able to use whatever he had at his disposal to devastating effect. The duke captured Bonn, Trier and Trarbach and celebrated success at Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet, to name a few. These victories swung the balance of power in Europe and turned France from assailant to defender. John's success

across the continent meant that he carved himself a reputation for military excellence, which was unrivalled until the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. He remains one of the few military commanders in history who was apparently never defeated in battle.

Winston was no doubt inspired by his ancestor's military achievements but his own track record was not to be as glittering. Some of his blunders resulted in the most crushing defeats experienced by the British Army in World War II. However, he did stand as a figurehead for a force that never lost hope, even in the hardest of times. The tally of wins and losses aside, it is likely that this strength of leadership would have impressed even his militarily flawless ancestor. Ultimately, both men achieved what they set out to do – win.

Unlike Winston, John's political victory was far from straightforward. Back home, the number of Tory peers in the cabinet was dwindling and he was forced to conform to Whig demands. France refused to agree to the rather harsh peace terms set out by the Whigs and resumed hostilities. John continued to beat them back down again but at an immense cost to his health.

When he tried to take a stand against the peace terms being discussed, he was swiftly dismissed, much to the shock of his allies.

Accused of misusing public money, and with fears for his own fortune he went into voluntary exile while the peace negotiations of the war he had won continued without him. It wasn't until Queen Anne died in 1714 that John returned to his homeland. He rose to favour once again under her successor, George I, and reclaimed some of his influence and prestige. However, John was now an old man and his health was fading rapidly. He reportedly experienced several strokes and lived in the East Wing of the still unfinished Blenheim Palace for three years before a final stroke claimed his life. The importance of this building to Winston is certainly no secret. It was within those walls that John struggled to build that Winston was born. Inside the idyllic summerhouse, dubbed 'The Temple of Diana', Winston proposed to his future wife, Clementine, sparking one of the most important companionships of his life.

Evidence for the vital relationship between these two famous Britons can still be observed at Chartwell, Winston's home for 40 years. Within the walls of the idyllic country house near the town of Westerham in Kent, in the bedroom that Churchill regarded as his inner sanctum, hangs a portrait of his most ambitious, brilliant ancestor – John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough.

Depiction of the Victory of the Grand Alliance, from 1704





GEORGE WASHINGTON

Today he's hailed as the father of the USA, but Washington's journey to legendary hero was a perilous and difficult one



Born on 22 February 1732, George Washington was the son of a slave-owning tobacco planter. George received a mixed education from a variety of tutors, and plans for him to join the British Royal Navy were cut short when his mother objected. Fate instead led Washington to become a surveyor, and he travelled for two years surveying land in the Culpeper, Frederick and Augusta counties. This position began a lifelong interest in landholdings, and he purchased his first piece of land as soon as his sizable income filled his pockets. And when his older brother died in 1752, Washington inherited not only his father's vast lands, but also the position of major in the Virginia militia.

It would not be long until Washington's natural leadership and drive would send him straight into the heat of battle. At a staggering 188 centimetres (6'2") tall, the young man towered above his contemporaries, and Virginia's Lieutenant General Robert Dinwiddie saw fit to use his imposing but inspiring nature to try to persuade the French to remove themselves from land claimed by Britain. When they refused, Washington returned with a small

force and attacked the French post at Fort Duquesne, killing the commander and nine men and taking the others as prisoners, all in 15 minutes. The event had huge international implications, and Great Britain and France began to pump forces into North America – The French and Indian War had begun. In a matter of minutes the name Washington became synonymous with three things – bravery, daring and recklessness.

Washington was rewarded for his quick thinking by being appointed commander in chief and colonel of the Virginia Regiment, the first full-time American military unit.

With command of over a thousand soldiers, Washington was tasked with defending Virginia's frontier, and he demonstrated his resolve and forthright approach as his unit engaged in 20 battles over 12 months. But his reckless attitude and inexperience was soon demonstrated when his unit exchanged friendly fire with another British force, killing 14 men.

His time commanding an army had taught Washington many things – how to bring the best out of his men, the importance of stamina and bravery, as well as discipline and training. It had also given him valuable insight into the British military tactics, and his struggles in dealing with government officials convinced him that a national government was the only way forward. However, when Washington retired from service in 1758, as far as he was concerned his time on the battlefield was over.

In 1759 Washington married the intelligent and wealthy Martha Dandridge Custis and together with her two children they moved to the plantation of Mount Vernon. Enjoying the newly inherited wealth from his marriage, Washington was now one of Virginia's wealthiest men and he concentrated on expanding and making the most out of his plantation. Little did he know that revolution was bubbling, and soon he would find himself back on the battlefield in what would become the most famous war in American history.

“WASHINGTON INHERITED NOT ONLY HIS FATHER'S VAST LANDS, BUT ALSO THE POSITION OF MAJOR IN THE VIRGINIA MILITIA”

MAKING HISTORY

Three reasons why Washington is considered the USA's greatest leader

Virtue

Washington twice gave up the chance of ultimate power. First at the end of the Revolutionary War when he surrendered his role as commander in chief, and again when he refused to rule as president for a third term. When George III was presented with the idea of Washington doing this, he said, "If he does that he will be the greatest man in the world."

Commitment to country

Washington did not become involved in the hostile arguments and squabbling of political debates, but instead acted as a peacekeeper between the groups. A true non-partisan, his primary aim was always the betterment of the country, rather than any personal gain.

Persistence

Washington was not the most gifted military leader; he suffered multiple losses and personal humiliations, but his determination to persevere in spite of repeated setbacks inspired his soldiers to do the same, which resulted in him creating one of the most celebrated underdog success stories in world history.

Washington wasn't the most likely of revolutionary leaders; although he opposed the controversial Stamp Act of 1765, during the early stirrings of revolution he was actually opposed to the colonies declaring independence. It wasn't until the passing of the Townshend acts of 1767 that he took an active role in the resistance. In an act of rebellion he encouraged the people of Virginia to boycott English goods until the acts were repealed. However, when the Intolerable

acts were passed in 1774, Washington decided that more forthright action needed to be taken.

Passionate and charismatic, Washington was an obvious choice to attend the First Continental Congress. Although the delegates appealed to the crown to revoke the intolerable acts, they didn't even make a dink in the steely British armour, and a Second Continental Congress was called the following year.

A lot had changed in a year, and Washington too had undergone something of a transformation. The battles at Lexington and Concord had shown the colonies that they were capable of taking on the might of the British, and when Washington arrived in Pennsylvania for the state meeting dressed head to toe in military gear, it sent a strong message: he was prepared for war. So was Congress. It formed the Continental Army on 14 June 1775 and it needed a leader. Reluctant and somewhat modest, Washington did not see himself as a leader capable of leading such a vitally important force, but for those around him there was no other choice. With proven military experience, a devoted patriot and a strong, commanding presence, Washington was appointed commander in chief of the force that would take on the mightiest nation on Earth.

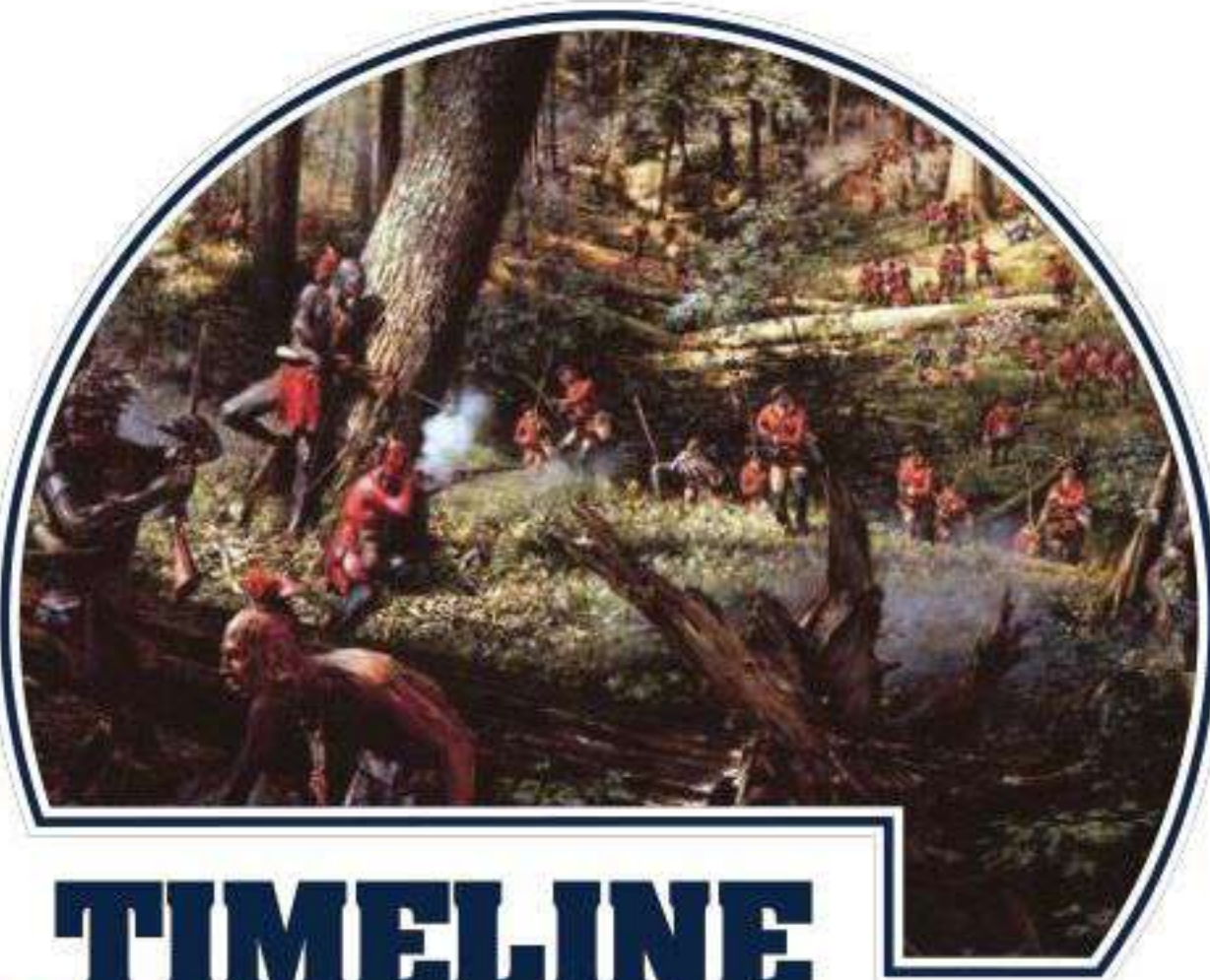
It did not take long for the new commander to prove his worth. In March 1776, Washington turned the Siege of Boston around by placing artillery on Dorchester Heights, low hills with a good view of Boston and its harbour. The perfectly placed, powerful cannons forced the British to retreat from the city, and Washington moved his army into New York City. Even the critical British papers couldn't deny the skills



Young Washington

of the captivating new leader who seemed capable of repelling their empire with ease.

Victory and gossip aside, in truth Washington was out of his depth. He had commanded men before, but only a force of a thousand soldiers – far from the tens of thousands at his disposal now. He had only fought in frontier warfare, far removed from the open-field battles he now faced. He had never commanded legions of cavalry or artillery – he was constantly learning on the job. Washington had to rely on his own intelligence and courage to have any



TIMELINE

● **French and Indian War**
The French and Indian War was part of a much longer conflict between Great Britain and France, known as the Seven Years War. The war was fought in the north of North America between the colonies of the two powers, ending with France losing its territory in North America. However, funding the war created a huge national debt in Britain and gave France a good reason to support American independence.
1754-1763



● **Stamp Act**
The resulting national debt of the Seven Years War in Britain had reached £130 million by 1764. Britain also needed a way to pay for its army in North America and decided the colonies should subsidise it. The Stamp Act forced citizens to pay taxes on documents and paper goods and was immediately unpopular as it was carried out without any consent. The outrage soon turned violent and the tax was never collected.
1765



● **Townshend Acts**
The Townshend Acts were a series of acts passed by the British Parliament upon the colonies in North America. These acts placed duties on vital, high-volume imported items such as glass, paints, paper and tea, among other things. The money raised was intended to pay to keep governors and judges loyal, and also to set a general precedent that the British had the right to tax the American colonies.
1767-1770



● **Boston Massacre**
This incident occurred when a heckling crowd gathered around a British guard, who was quickly joined by eight more British soldiers. The soldiers fired at the crowd, killing three people and wounding multiple others. Two more later died of their wounds. The soldiers were arrested for manslaughter but were released without charge. This event helped to create an immensely anti-British sentiment in the colonies.
1770



George Washington fought with the British in the assault on the French-held Fort Duquesne

hope of snatching victory from his seasoned, experienced rivals.

This inexperience manifested itself in the crippling defeat the commander suffered during the Battle of Long Island. In an effort to seize New York, the British general William Howe unleashed a devastating campaign that Washington failed to subdue. So great was the British attack that Washington was forced to retreat his entire army across the East River under cover of darkness. Although this feat itself was remarkable, for the self-critical leader it was a swift and brutal reminder of his own inadequacies as a general, and he quickly realised this war would not be easily won.



An illustration of Washington's home in Mount Vernon



● Boston Tea Party

In an effort to force the colonies to accept the Townshend duty on Tea, Britain passed the Tea Act, allowing the East India Company to ship its tea to North America. In defiance, protestors boarded the ships and threw chests full of tea into Boston Harbour. Parliament responded harshly, by passing the Intolerable Acts, which took away the rights of the state of Massachusetts to govern itself.

1773



● First Continental Congress

Delegates from 12 of the 13 British colonies in America met at Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia to discuss ways to halt the Intolerable Acts. They made plans to refuse to import British goods until their grievances were met. When these efforts proved unsuccessful, a Second Continental Congress was held the next year to prepare the country for the impending American Revolutionary War.

1774



● The Battles of Lexington and Concord

When American intelligence learned that British troops planned to march on Concord, they were quick to assemble their forces and take up arms against them. However only 77 militiamen faced 700 British at Lexington and were quickly defeated. The British continued to Concord to search for arms, but they were forced back by 500 militiamen, winning the colonies their first war victory.

1775



● Battle of Bunker Hill

Set during the Siege of Boston, this battle saw the British mount an attack against the colonial troops stationed in Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill. Although the British were victorious, the heavy losses suffered by the redcoats led it to be a hollow victory, and it proved the Americans could hold their own against their foes in battle. Shortly after the conflict, King George III officially declared the colonies to be in a state of rebellion.

1775

REBELS

Organisation

There were 35,000 continentals in the United States with 44,500 militia. Their French allies increased their numbers with 12,000 French soldiers in America and 63,000 at Gibraltar. They also had 53 ships in service throughout the war. George Washington was commander in chief and Nathanael Greene served as major general.

Weapons

When the war began the colonies did not have a professional standing army of any kind, with many colonies only able to supply minutemen who were required to equip themselves – with most carrying rifles. The army's weapon of choice was the flintlock musket and they also carried bayonets.

Resources

The Continental Army suffered from massive supply issues. Supplies were repeatedly seized by British patrols. They also had to combat a primitive road system, which resulted in regular shortages of food, clothing, ammunition, tents and a host of essential military equipment, constantly pitching the odds against them.

Morale

The rebels' greatest weapon was the belief in their grand cause – fighting for their liberty from the oppressive British Crown. It was this strong morale belief in their cause that encouraged American leaders, who knew they were facing a well equipped and disciplined foe, to push on despite multiple crippling defeats.



But the British had a crippling weakness, too. They were simply too sure they were going to win. Howe so fatally underestimated the will of the American troops and their reckless leader that he left his Hessian soldiers at Trenton, confident the war would be won in the next few months. Washington, on the other hand, was acutely aware of the morale of his



The March to Valley Forge as painted by William Trego



Troops huddle together in the cold at Valley Forge

“WHEN WASHINGTON RETIRED FROM SERVICE IN 1758, AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, HIS TIME ON THE BATTLEFIELD WAS OVER”

soldiers. After the defeat in New York and the humiliating retreat, they needed something positive to inspire them, and Trenton was right there for the taking.

The plan was one only Washington could have thought up – bold, gutsy and downright dangerous, he led his soldiers across the perilous and icy Delaware River on a freezing Boxing Day in 1776. Only 2,400 of his men were able to make it across without turning back, but it was enough. Completely unprepared for the attack, the Hessians at Trenton were overwhelmed and swiftly defeated by Washington and his men. A few days later the commander led a counter-attack on a British force sent to attack his army

at Princeton, achieving another small – but essential – American victory.

Meanwhile, the British redcoats still believed the rebellion could be stopped like a cork in a bottle. Howe thought that by taking control of key colonial cities, the river of rebellion would turn into a drought and the population would surrender to British rule. When Howe set his sights on the revolutionary hub of Philadelphia, Washington rode out to meet him, but, perhaps with his previous victories clouding his judgement, the commander was outmatched and Philadelphia fell to the British. However, the colonists' cause received a major boon when British General Burgoyne was forced to surrender his entire army of 6,300 men at the



Washington and his men crossing the Delaware River

Battle of Saratoga. It seemed that major world players were finally beginning to believe the Americans had a chance of besting the mighty British Empire, and France openly allied itself with the rebels.

While General Howe concentrated on capturing key cities, Washington had a revelation. Although individual battles were important, the key to victory was not military success, but instead his ability to keep the heart of the resistance alive and pumping. This was something out of British hands and solely in his own.

This spirit of rebellion faced its most challenging obstacle yet over the long winter of 1777. For six long months the soldiers at the military camp of Valley Forge suffered thousands of disease-ridden deaths. With starvation rife and supplies low, many feared the horrendous conditions would force the desperate army to mutiny. Washington himself faced immense criticism from the American public and Congress, who urged him to hurry the war effort, while behind the scenes anti-Washington movements gained ground. Washington simply replied: "Whenever the public gets dissatisfied with my service [...] I shall quit the helm [...] and retire to a private life." The critics soon fell silent.

Although the conditions had been testing, to put it mildly, the soldiers emerged from

the winter in good spirits. Washington demonstrated that his sting was stronger than ever when his forces attacked the British flank attempting to leave Monmouth Courthouse.

Although the battle ultimately ended in a stalemate, Washington had finally achieved what he set out to do since the beginning of the war – hold his own in a pitched battle. This was massive for the Americans; it proved the growing Continental Army was developing its skills at an alarming speed, and if the horrendous winter that they had emerged from had not crushed them, what chance did the British have?

The French seemed to share this attitude. On 5 September 1781, 24 French ships emerged victorious against 19 British vessels at the Battle of Chesapeake. The success prevented the British from reinforcing the troops of Lord Cornwallis, who was blockaded in Yorktown, Virginia, and allowed crucial French troops to pour into the Continental Army, bringing vast supplies of artillery with them. This was exactly the opportunity Washington needed, and he didn't plan to let it go to waste.

With the British army trapped and exposed, and his own swelling in size, Washington led his men out of Williamsburg and surrounded Yorktown. From late-September the Continental Army moved steadily closer to the redcoats, forcing them to pull back from their outer

REDCOATS

Organisation

There were 56,000 British redcoats in North America along with a combined force of 52,000 loyalists, freed slaves and natives. They also had 78 Royal Navy ships at their service. William Howe served as commander in chief, but there were many decorated generals and officers such as Thomas Gage and Henry Clinton.

Weapons

The British army depended on the .75-calibre flintlock musket popularly known as "Brown Bess." They also carried bayonets and, occasionally, short-barrel muskets. The redcoats also used cannons to great effect, to the degree that if an American unit was without cannon, they would not face a cannon-supported British troop.

Resources

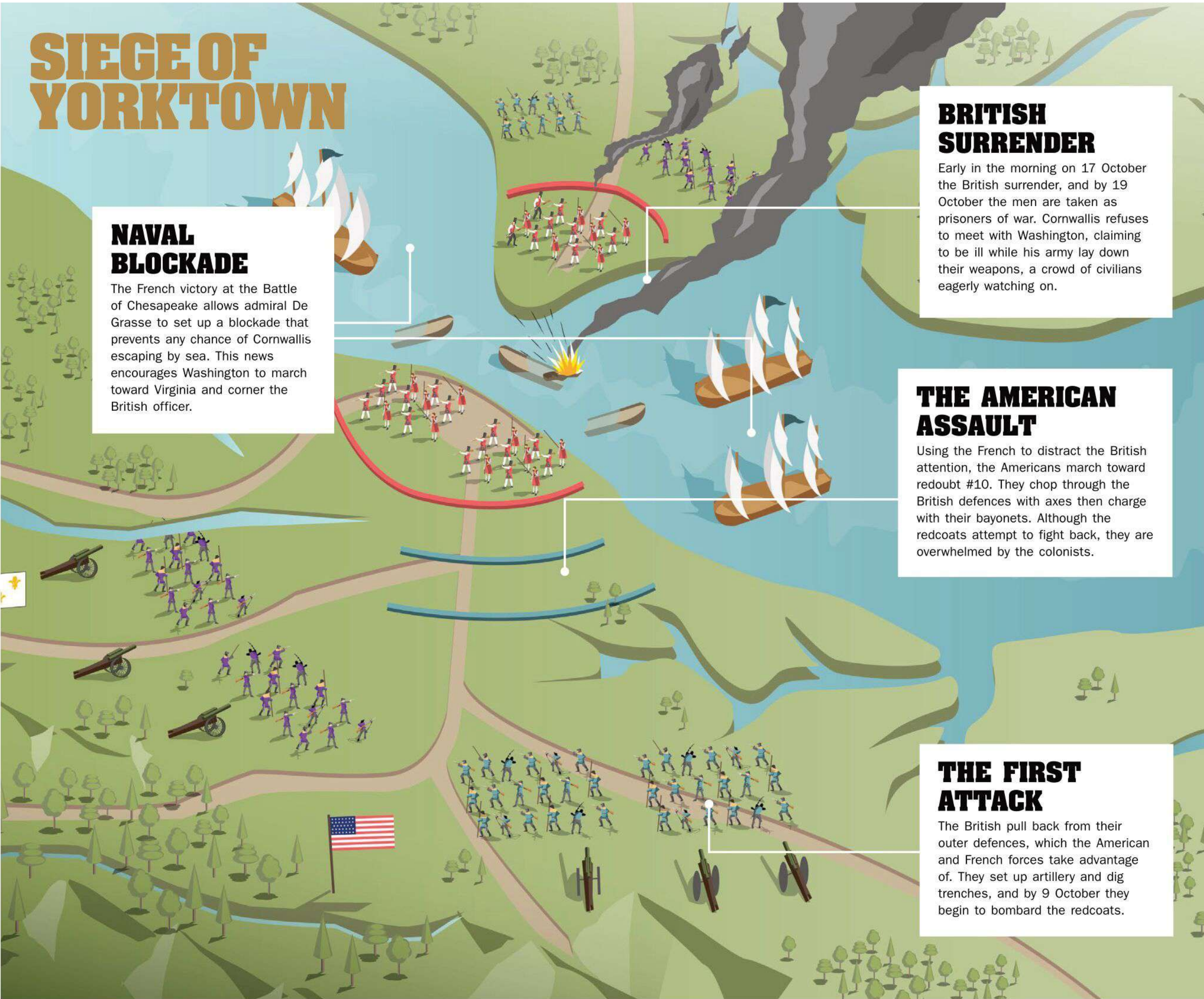
Although British soldiers were better equipped than their American counterparts, they were fighting away from home, and supplies could take months to reach their destinations. Many British had to rely on loyal locals supplying them with food and praying the vital supplies would survive the 4,800km (3,000mi) trip across the ocean.

Morale

The British believed they could easily steamroll the rebels and this underestimation of their foe cost them dearly. The war was also expensive, and support at home was mixed at best. For many soldiers struggling in terrible conditions away from home, there was little motivation to fight.



defences, which left them open for the Americans and French to use. As the colonists began to set up artillery, the British pelted them with steady fire. In spite of this and at some great risk to himself, Washington continued to visit and motivate his men on the front line, and by 5 October the commander was ready to make his move.



SIEGE OF YORKTOWN

NAVAL BLOCKADE

The French victory at the Battle of Chesapeake allows admiral De Grasse to set up a blockade that prevents any chance of Cornwallis escaping by sea. This news encourages Washington to march toward Virginia and corner the British officer.

BRITISH SURRENDER

Early in the morning on 17 October the British surrender, and by 19 October the men are taken as prisoners of war. Cornwallis refuses to meet with Washington, claiming to be ill while his army lay down their weapons, a crowd of civilians eagerly watching on.

THE AMERICAN ASSAULT

Using the French to distract the British attention, the Americans march toward redoubt #10. They chop through the British defences with axes then charge with their bayonets. Although the redcoats attempt to fight back, they are overwhelmed by the colonists.

THE FIRST ATTACK

The British pull back from their outer defences, which the American and French forces take advantage of. They set up artillery and dig trenches, and by 9 October they begin to bombard the redcoats.

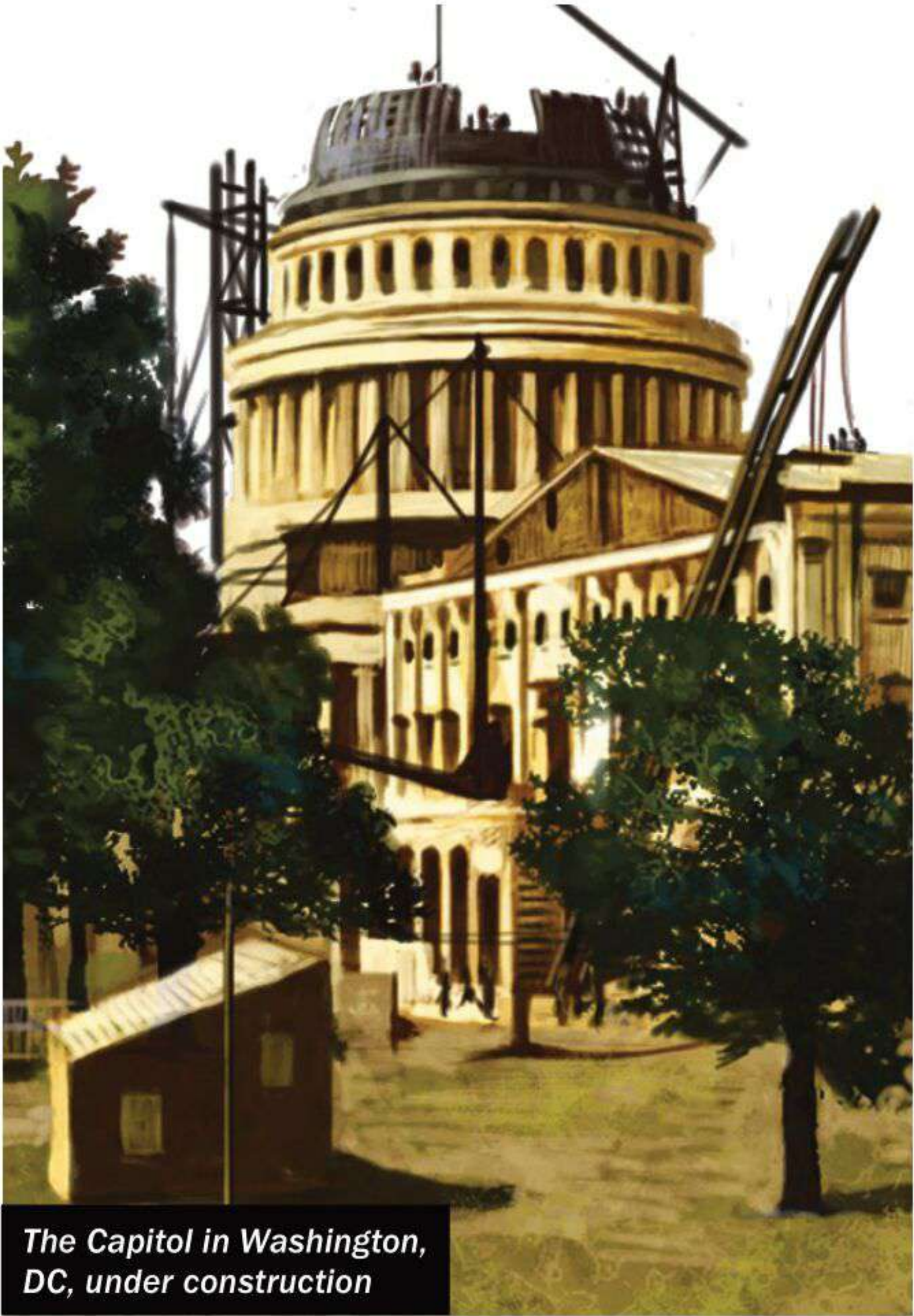
VALLEY FORGE

Pennsylvania, 28 January 1777

The cold today was worse than it has ever been. The crowded wooden huts provide shelter from the biting wind, but the cold passes between the slats, through my threadbare shirt and nestles in my bones. My quest to procure a set of shoes continues to be unsuccessful.

I thought that after marching through the snow in bare feet someone would take pity on me – but there are no supplies coming. The food too is running low. For the past week I have only eaten firecake – a sticky, bland abomination of water and flour that fills my stomach but leaves the soul ravenous.

I shouldn't complain – I am one of the lucky few untouched by the diseases that ravage the camp. So many men have been plagued by itchy rashes and blisters or fevers that refuse to calm. The only relief here are the brave few women who wash and mend our uniforms, or sometimes simply provide a shoulder to men who have no will to go on.



As a vicious storm raged, Washington grasped his pickaxe in his hand and struck several blows into the dirt that would become the new trench the Americans would use to bombard the British. By 5pm on 9 October, the Americans were pelting the British with a relentless stream of cannon fire. The British ships were sunk and soldiers deserted en masse. More American trenches were dug as they gained land, and when Washington's men rushed toward the British redoubt, they overwhelmed the surprised redcoats. As Washington rained artillery fire down on the town, Cornwallis's attempts at escape across the York River were unsuccessful and he finally surrendered to his foe.

Little did Washington know that the victory he had secured at Yorktown would lead to the ultimate surrender of British hostilities, the end of the war and ultimately American freedom. On 3 September 1783 the Treaty of Paris was signed between representatives of

both countries, which proclaimed that Britain recognised the independence of the United States. With victory declared, Washington disbanded his army and wished farewell to the men who had valued him not only as a leader, but also a fellow soldier. On 23 December 1783, in an action that would define him in the history books, he resigned as commander in chief of the army and humbly returned to his home in Mount Vernon.

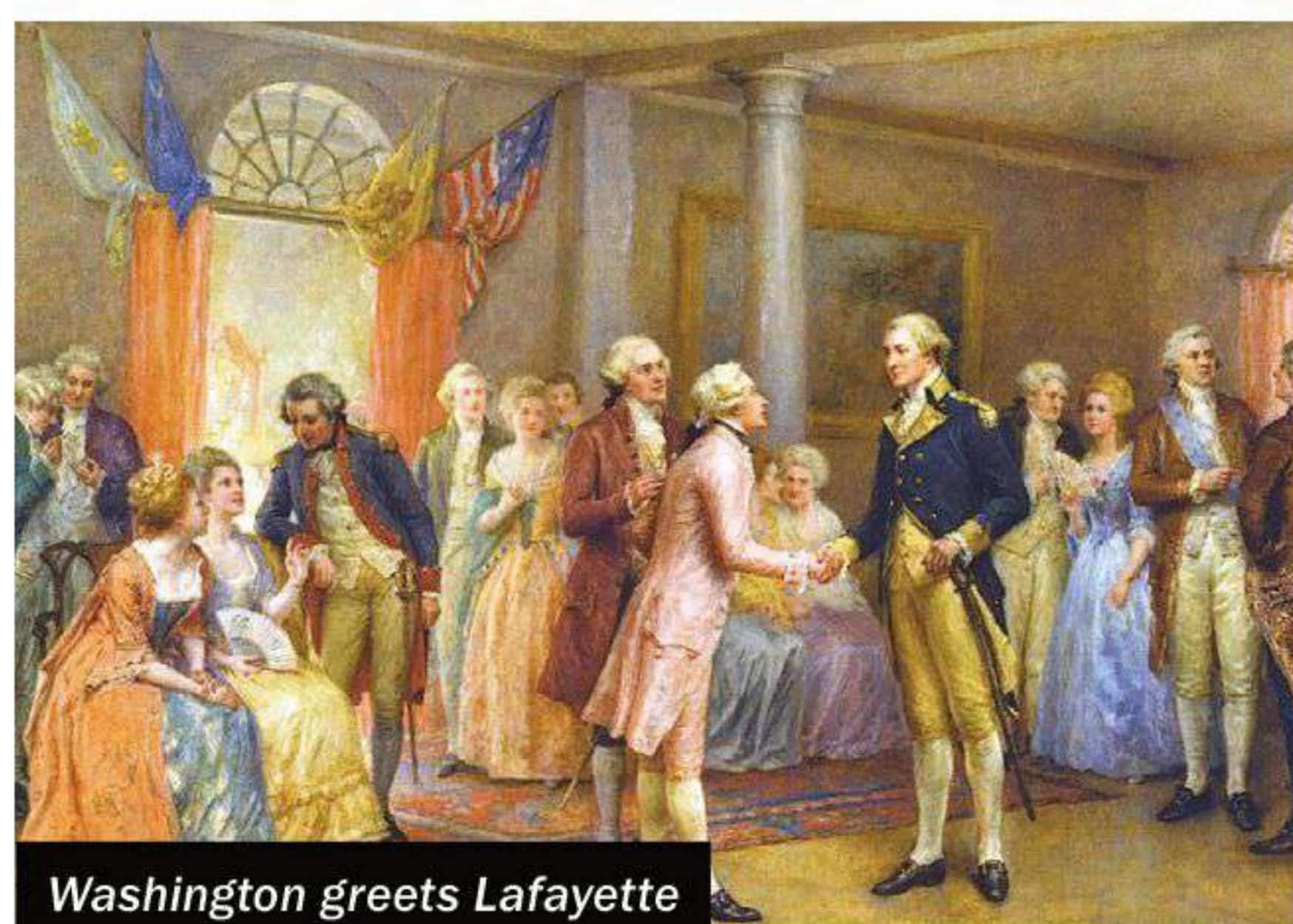
However, without him his country was struggling. With nobody to unite them the states fought and squabbled among themselves over boundaries and inflicted harsh taxes on their own citizens. The ex-commander watched from afar as the land he had led to freedom struggled to support itself. He was dismayed, but hesitant to act.

It wasn't until an armed uprising known as Shays' Rebellion took place in Massachusetts that Washington was finally persuaded to step into the limelight once more.

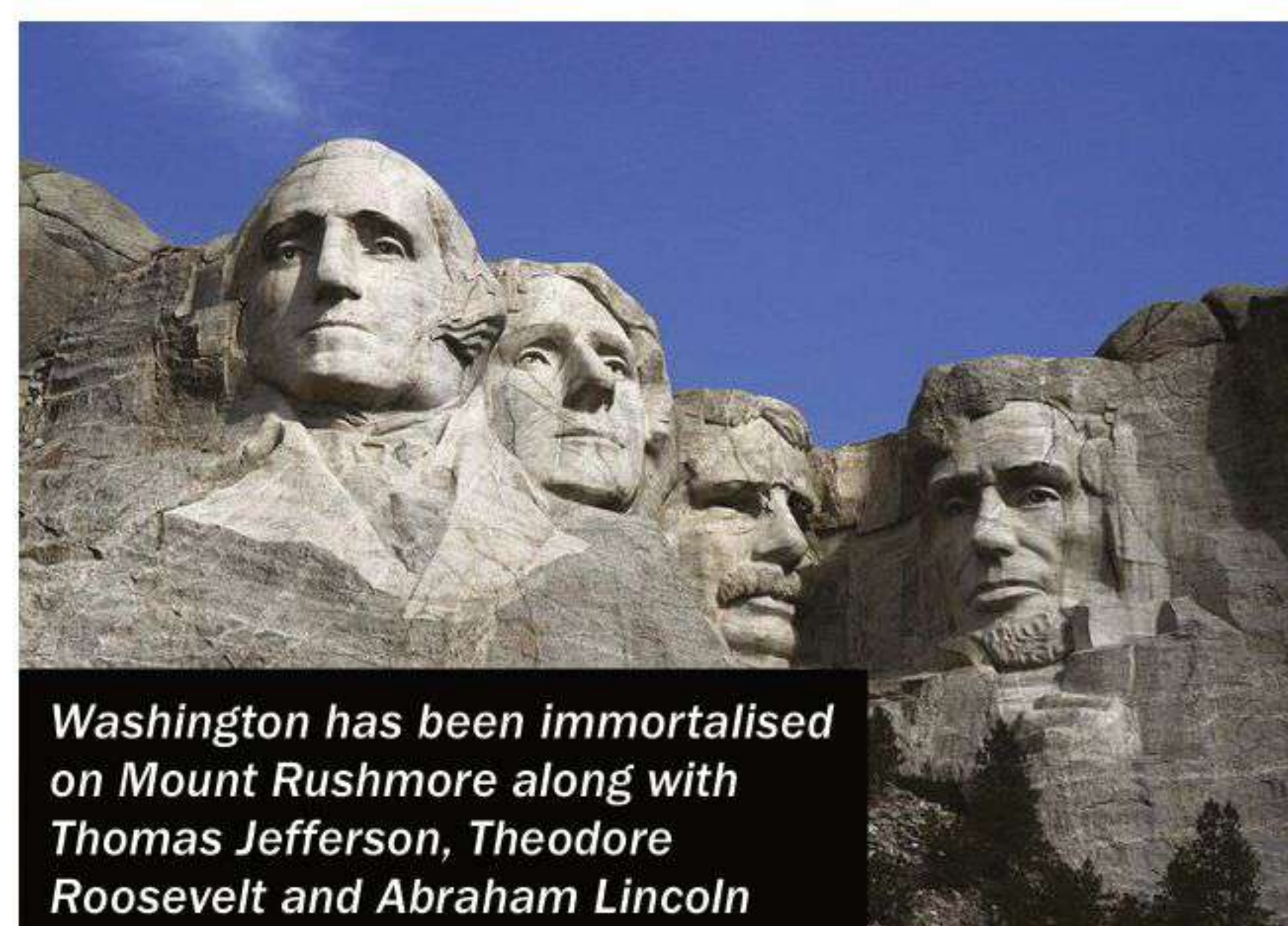
Washington quietly attended the Constitution Convention held in Philadelphia in 1787. There he sat and listened silently to the proceedings, speaking only once. However, his prestige spoke volumes and those gathered there agreed the national government needed more authority – it needed a figure strong and commanding enough to maintain control. Washington was unanimously chosen to fulfil this role. He became president of the convention in 1787, and by 1789 he was unanimously elected once more, but this time as the first-ever president of the United States – the only one in history to receive 100 per

cent of the votes. He would serve two terms as president from 1789 to 1797 until he would yet again relinquish the power he could so easily have exploited. In the spring of 1797, he finally returned to his precious Mount Vernon, realising, perhaps more so than any one of the many people who supported him, that ultimate power in the land of the free could not lay solely in one man's hands indefinitely.

“WASHINGTON DID NOT SEE HIMSELF AS A LEADER CAPABLE OF LEADING SUCH A VITALLY IMPORTANT FORCE”



Washington greets Lafayette



Washington has been immortalised on Mount Rushmore along with Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln



A depiction of Washington's entry into New York in 1759

WASHINGTON MYTHS CUT DOWN

We get an expert opinion on the myths surrounding this legendary man

Stephen Brumwell is a freelance writer and independent historian living in Amsterdam. His book, *George Washington: Gentleman Warrior*, won the 2013 George Washington Book Prize.



He had wooden teeth

George Washington was plagued with dental problems from his twenties, and by 1789, had just one of his own teeth remaining. He owned several sets of false teeth, but none was crafted from wood. Instead, Washington's dentures incorporated a variety of materials – bone, 'sea-horse', or hippopotamus ivory, and human teeth – fixed by lead, gold and metal wire. The belief that Washington's false teeth were wooden probably originated in the brown-stained appearance of surviving examples – apparently owing to his fondness for port wine.

He cut down a cherry tree and confessed to his father

Perhaps the best known of all the legends spun around Washington, the 'cherry tree story' first surfaced in a biography written after his death by Mason Locke Weems. Concerned with portraying Washington as an exemplary role model for his countrymen, 'Parson Weems' concocted the fable of the six-year-old hatcheting his father's prized cherry tree, and then deflecting parental wrath by frankly confessing to the deed with the words "I can't tell a lie, Pa."

He threw a silver dollar across the Potomac River

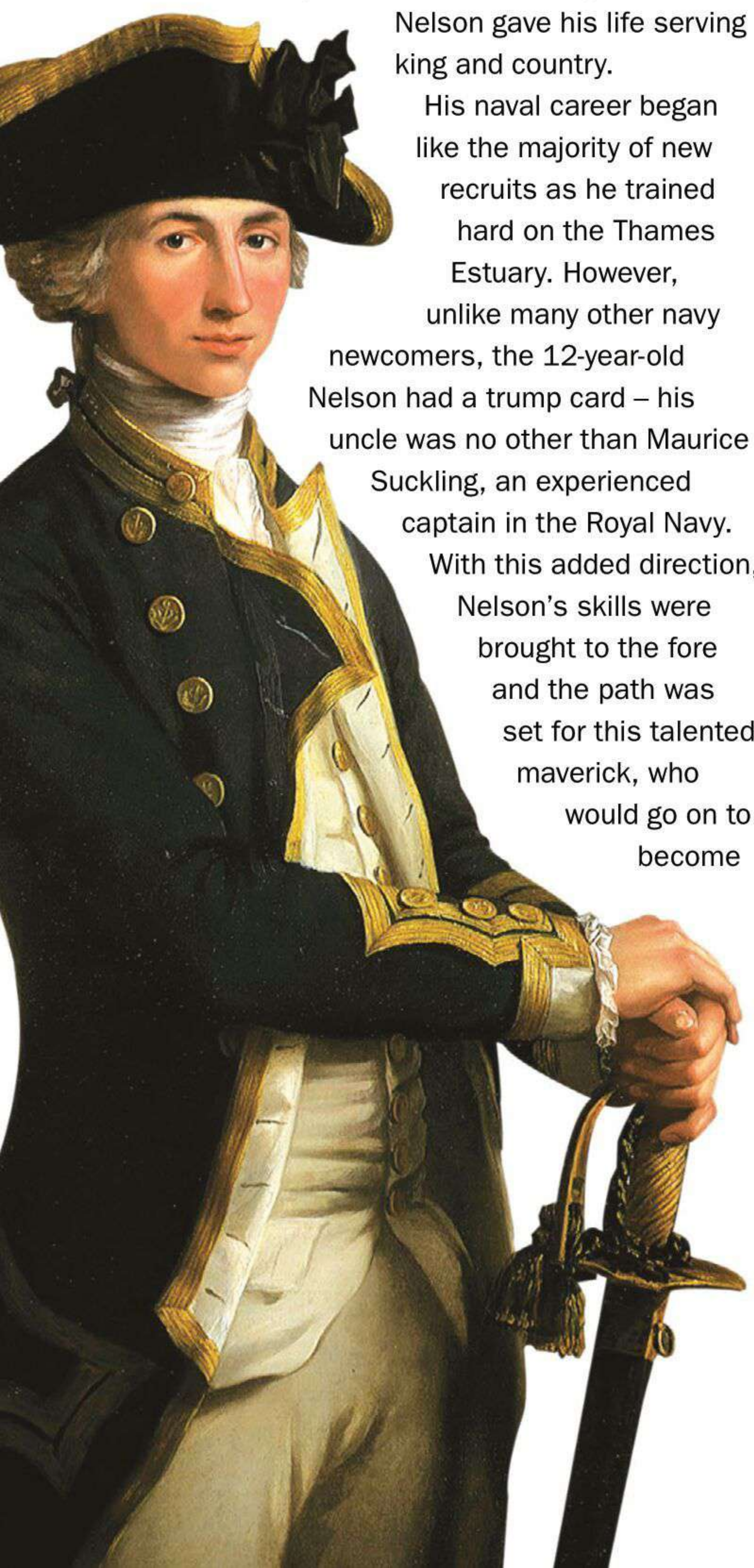
Standing 188cm (6'2") tall, and with a well-muscled physique, young George Washington was renowned for his strength. Yet even Washington in his prime would have struggled to hurl a silver dollar across the Potomac River, which is more than 1.6km (1mi) wide opposite his Virginian home at Mount Vernon. Also, silver dollars were only introduced in 1794, when Washington was already in his sixties.

He wore a wig

Although wigs were fashionable during Washington's lifetime, he never wore one, preferring to keep his own hair, which was reddish-brown, long and tied back in a tight queue, or 'pigtail'. However, Washington regularly used the white hair powder that was customary among men of his wealthy social class, especially for formal occasions, and this gave the impression of a wig, apparent in many of his portraits.

HORATIO NELSON

The story of the Royal Navy's greatest admiral from his early beginnings to the glory of Trafalgar



Horatio Nelson's journey from obscurity to national hero is a remarkable story. Filled with epic sea battles, harbour assaults and land skirmishes against a plethora of rival world powers,

Nelson gave his life serving king and country.

His naval career began like the majority of new recruits as he trained hard on the Thames Estuary. However, unlike many other navy newcomers, the 12-year-old Nelson had a trump card – his uncle was no other than Maurice Suckling, an experienced captain in the Royal Navy.

With this added direction, Nelson's skills were brought to the fore and the path was set for this talented maverick, who would go on to become

one of the best commanders to ever serve the Royal Navy.

From the resounding success of the Nile to the ingenuity of Copenhagen, this is the story of the flawed genius and all-round maverick who helped Britain rule the waves in an era of an emerging America in the New World and almost constant threats from mainland Europe in the shape of France and Spain.

Polar bears, malaria and yellow fever

Fast tracked through the ranks due to his uncle's position, along with a fair amount of natural talent, Nelson was soon operating outside the safety of British waters. His first trip was a regulation one-year journey to the Caribbean aboard a merchant ship, but things would soon get much tougher for the young midshipman. One particularly arduous journey came in the form of the 1773 expedition on board HMS Carcass, a bomb vessel sent to the Arctic Circle in the hope of finding a north-west passage to the Pacific. After passing Spitsbergen, the ship's course was barred by ice. While stuck, Nelson ventured off the ship, where he was attacked by a polar bear. After his musket failed to fire, he was forced to use the weapon to club the bear. Some sources say that fire from the ship's guns gave him a helping hand to scare it away, saving Nelson's life. Perhaps even worse for the inexperienced sailor was a voyage to India three years later, in 1776. Nelson, who had always been a sickly child, suffered with a near-fatal bout of malaria and was quarantined. After time spent in isolation, he eventually recovered, but had recurrent partial paralysis for the rest of his life. During the illness, Nelson began to get

delirious. On the voyage back to Britain aboard HMS Dolphin, he had a vision of a glowing orb and a premonition that one day he would become a hero. The young sailor had become depressed during the trauma of his malarial fever, and his recovery from the hallucinations signalled a turning point in his life. Fired up by ambition and a new-found religious compassion, he was determined to prove himself and become a true leader of men.

The following year, Nelson passed the examination for lieutenant, and by 1779 he was a captain. His first assignments were in the Baltic and Canada, as well as the West Indies, where Britain was beginning to lose its grip on its commercial interests in the New World. The American Revolutionary War was at its height and the British Empire was struggling against the Patriots. Nelson, now the captain of a frigate ship and serving under Admiral Robert Digby and Lord Samuel Hood, was delegated to operations against the Spanish settlements in Nicaragua. He participated in the disastrous attack on San Juan in 1780, where the British force was riddled with yellow fever; Nelson himself was lucky to survive.

After the war, Britain still held on to its colonies in the West Indies, and in 1784, after briefly returning home, Nelson was entrusted with enforcing new navigation acts in the area. Trade had been prohibited between the new

"FIRED UP BY AMBITION, HE WAS DETERMINED TO PROVE HIMSELF AND BECOME A TRUE LEADER OF MEN"



Nelson was awarded many honours in his life, and can be seen here wearing his Ottoman Order of the Crescent and Order of Saint Ferdinand and of Merit, among others

American states and the remaining British colonies, and Nelson would be the man to police these new regulations.

He oversaw the development of British harbour facilities on the islands including his very own Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua. In his efforts to protect these new assets, though, Nelson often went one step too far in applying the commercial shipping laws. After seizing four American ships, both his commander-in-chief and the governor of the Leeward Islands came into conflict with him over his law enforcement. They were so angered at Nelson's methods that there were attempts to have him court martialled, or even removed from the Royal Navy completely.

Luckily for Nelson, the Admiralty and King George III voted against any action being taken on the captain, who was already showing his true colours as a determined and somewhat rebellious character. However, he was not let off entirely, and was refused another command.

Operations in the Mediterranean

After that misdemeanour, a year later Nelson visited the island of Nevis and met Frances Nisbet. He was at a low ebb after his issues with the Admiralty, and Frances helped him

through what was a strenuous and lonely time for him. The couple later married in March 1787 and Nelson became the stepfather of her seven-year-old son, Josiah.

With the Royal Navy still reeling from the combined US, French and Spanish attacks, the young captain was back home in Burnham Thorpe, out of work and barely surviving on peacetime half pay. This lasted five long years, and Nelson became bitter at an Admiralty he was convinced had a vendetta against him.

In January 1793, all this changed with the execution of the French King Louis XVI. Revolution was escalating and the British monarchy was determined to stop it spreading out of mainland Europe. Leaving France behind, and taking the 13-year-old Josiah with him, Nelson answered the call of duty and was given command of the 64-gun third-rate ship of the line HMS Agamemnon. This was a step up from anything Nelson had experienced before. The ship was fast and manoeuvrable, and manned by a well-trained crew.

Supporting British interests in the Mediterranean, the ship was assigned to Toulon in southern France, which was under attack by French revolutionaries. Among the forces laying siege to the port was a 24-year-old officer of artillery by the name of Napoleon

Bonaparte. The momentum of the battle was with the French and Nelson was sent to Naples to gather reinforcements. This was all in vain, however, as the revolutionary forces soon conquered the city.

Afterwards, Royal Navy commander Lord Hood relocated to Corsica, where Nelson and his crew were tasked with capturing the communes of Bastia and Calvi. It was here that Nelson would receive the first of his many war wounds. While in the field, a French shot launched debris into his face, forcing him from the battle and leaving him almost blind in his right eye. After being patched up, Nelson, who fancied himself as a bit of a spin doctor, was the first to approach the newspapers with his account of the battle. He always made sure his version was the one printed, a trait that would stay with him throughout his naval career.

The spin wasn't always needed though: Nelson was forging a reputation as a daring and bold leader who was willing to disobey orders when he believed his views were better suited to the task in hand. Discipline in the Royal Navy was very strict, with captains and commanders often ruling with an iron fist and by striking fear into their subordinates. Nelson was different. He went against the standard authoritarian manner employed by his



THE YOUNG COMMANDER

Aboard HMS Agamemnon, Nelson's favourite ship

A 64-gun behemoth of the 1777 Ardent class, when Nelson first stepped aboard Agamemnon in 1793 it was far and above anything he had commanded before. He was the vessel's captain for three years of its 28-year-long career in the Royal Navy. Serving on the war-torn seas of the Napoleonic

era, Agamemnon fought in the major battles at Copenhagen and Trafalgar.

Although he was only on it for a short time, Nelson remained fond of the ship and it served in the Royal Navy until 1809, when it was wrecked off the coast of Uruguay.

Agamemnon (far left) was first commanded by Nelson in 1793

contemporaries. Instead, he had an empathy and even a love for his men, which led him to be universally admired. His confidence rubbed off on the men he commanded and the admiration was of benefit to Nelson as well, who, plagued by insecurity and vanity, relished the flattery and praise he received.

A rebellious streak

The long-serving Hood was replaced by Admiral William Hotham at the tail end of 1794. Hotham's position at the helm was short-lived, however, as the veteran 60-year-old seaman Sir John Jervis came into the fold. Nelson instantly had a good rapport with Jervis, who recognised the young man's qualities as a leader. The new appointment coincided with French expansion in the Mediterranean as the British were forced to retreat back to the safety of Gibraltar. Jervis's respect for and trust in Nelson would soon be tested, as the British fleet was ambushed by Spanish ships on their way out of the Mediterranean from Gibraltar. The Battle of Cape St Vincent was about to begin.

Despite being outnumbered and outgunned, a decisive defeat was inflicted on the Armada Española, with Nelson the architect of the victory. On 14 February, Jervis had sailed the British through the core of the Spanish fleet after being waylaid by foggy weather. The admiral's hastily arranged plan was to cut between the two Spanish divisions and eliminate one after the other. However, the ships of the line were travelling at such a speed that it was evident they would not be able to turn quickly enough to undertake this manoeuvre. Nelson, who had been transferred from Agamemnon to HMS Captain, was the only one to predict the impending failure, so defied orders by turning out of line to attack the front of the second Spanish division.

As Jervis slowly came to help, Captain held off seven Spanish Man-of-War, utilising both efficient gunnery and daring boarding raids. Nelson's bold tactics were critical and earned him a knighthood as well as a promotion to rear admiral. His achievements, although undoubtedly great, were embellished by Nelson, who once again played the press to

NELSON'S EARLY LIFE

The childhood of the man who would become one of the greatest admirals the Royal Navy had ever seen

Horatio Nelson was born into an academic family and was the sixth of 11 children. A sickly child, his father Edmund was a clergyman in Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk, while his mother, Catherine, had relations in high places. Her great uncle was Robert Walpole, the former Whig prime minister of Britain, but even more important to the young Horatio was her brother, Captain Maurice Suckling, the future controller of the British Navy. When Catherine died, it was time for Horatio to go to sea and it was his uncle Maurice that would show him the ropes.

The young Nelson was thrust straight into navy life, joining up at Chatham at the tender age of 12. The first ship Nelson stepped aboard was HMS *Raisonnable*, and it is believed that on his first day, he paced around the ship being ignored by everyone. It was not until the next day when his uncle arrived that he got his first role as an apprentice midshipman. Despite suffering from seasickness, his talent and commitment soon shone through. Horatio Nelson's career in the Royal Navy had begun.



THE BATTLE OF THE NILE

Nelson pummels Admiral Brueys d'Aigalliers' fleet, crippling the French forces in North Africa

1-2 AUGUST 1798

01 FRENCH FOUND AT ALEXANDRIA

After a long search for the French fleet, it is eventually found at the port of Alexandria in Egypt. 200 transport vessels are anchored here but the main attack force is to the east in the Bay of Abukir.

03 LAND DEFENCE

On Abukir Island, French positions on the coast heavily bombard the British ships but it turns out to be relatively ineffectual. Back on the water, the British ship Orion disables the Guerrier and attacks Serieuse and Franklin further down the French line.

05 THE BELLEROPHON

One ship that encapsulates the British aggression in the campaign is HMS Bellerophon. Racing into battle, it heads straight for Orient, the largest French vessel. The ship fights valiantly but is outmatched by Orient, which unleashed its devastating broadsides.

07 THE ORIENT EXPLODES

The French admiral Brueys is fatally injured and dies on board Orient just before the ship's final moments. Under heavy fire from the Alexander, Swiftsure and Leander, the vessel's magazines ignite and the crew dive into the sea as it explodes.

02 BRITISH ATTACK

The Royal Navy ships sail into the French line, firing at the bows and sterns. The French Navy is caught unawares by the British attack as its admiral, Brueys, was convinced that Nelson would not launch an attack as the light dwindled.

04 ENTRANCE OF VANGUARD

Nelson's flagship, Vanguard, enters the fray and takes the seaward line of the French Navy. The ship engages with Aquilon and Spartite and takes heavy fire, with so much damage caused that it has to be bailed out by Minotaur.

06 ALL-OUT ATTACK ON ORIENT

As the mastless Bellerophon drifts away, ships surround Orient. Pounding it with relentless fire, the British are determined to bring down the behemoth. On Vanguard, Nelson is struck by a langridge shot and treated for his wounds.

08 THE BATTLE IS WON

The shock loss of Orient reverberates across the battlefield, which is now plunged into darkness. French resistance continues throughout the night until 3pm the next day. The French invasion of Egypt stalls and Nelson's reputation grows to unprecedented levels.

HMS VICTORY NELSON'S FLAGSHIP

How the famous ship performed its duty at the last great line-based conflict in history: Trafalgar

TARGET ACQUIRED

Victory's primary objective at Trafalgar was to eliminate the Santísima Trinidad and the Bucentaure. In doing so, it took many blows but survived due to the French habit of aiming high at masts rather than low at decks.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Victory had taken so many hits that it was completely immobilised. Nelson's flagship may have been a near wreck, but it had taken out its opposite number the Redoubtable. The Royal Navy's superior gunnery had won the day.

“VICTORY WOULD LINE UP
ALONGSIDE THE OPPOSING
SHIP AS QUICKLY AS
POSSIBLE. THEN IT COULD
UNLEASH THE FULL FURY
OF ITS THREE GUN DECKS
IN A BROADSIDE SALVO”

LINE WARFARE

To utilise its devastating cannons effectively, Victory would line up alongside the opposing ship as quickly as possible. Then it could unleash the full fury of its three gun decks in a broadside salvo.

VICTORY'S CREW

Up to 830 men packed themselves into Victory's three decks. The conditions were cramped and the diet poor. Nelson did everything he could to ensure scurvy didn't run riot, as he himself had lost teeth to the disease.

By the time of Trafalgar, Victory was 46 years old but could still hold its own on the Napoleonic battlefield

THE SHIP IN SAIL

Victory could achieve a top speed of 16km/h (10mph), which was quick for the era. 37 sails and 41.8km (26 miles) of rigging would help propel the vessel through the oceans.

VICTORY FACTS

- ★ It is the only surviving ship to have fought in the Napoleonic Wars, the French Revolutionary Wars and the American Revolutionary War.
- ★ The ship held a mighty 104 cannons in three different batteries. The biggest guns were 32 pounders.
- ★ 6,000 elm and oak trees were cut down to construct Victory.
- ★ The three square sails cover 5,440 square metres (17,847 square feet).
- ★ 400,000 people a year visit the warship, which now stands in a dry dock in Portsmouth, UK.

VICTORY KEEPS FIGHTING

Despite the immense amount of casualties, the ship lost few men on the lower decks, so it could keep firing despite taking major hits. The opposite was true on many French ships, so they were immobilised quicker due to the accurate British gunnery.

TRAFALGAR CASUALTIES

As well as the mortal wounding of their charismatic admiral, 51 servicemen were killed and 91 injured. This was the highest amount of any British ship in the battle.

BOARDING VICTORY

The ship was boarded by a small crew from the French Redoubtable but easily survived the attack, with its marines cutting down the attackers.

his advantage. Writing his own account of the battle, he passed his description of events on to his friend Captain William Locker, who ensured this would be the story put to press.

After the battle, the British fleet sailed to Lisbon for a refit and to clear the ships of their battle scars. Later that year, mutinies became a real issue for the Royal Navy, like the insurrections at Spithead, the Nore and Cadiz in 1797. Dissenters were dealt with severely, with court martials and even death sentences for many of those that disobeyed. The date of execution for the dissenters at Cadiz fell on a Sunday. Some senior officers were opposed to execution on a holy day, but Admiral Jervis overruled them and the sentence went ahead.

Nelson congratulated Jervis on his decisive response to the mutiny and is said to have remarked: "Had it been Christmas Day instead of Sunday, I would have executed them. We know not what might have been hatched by a Sunday's grog; now your discipline is safe." When not dealing with mutinies, Nelson was hard at work commanding the navy's inshore blockading squadron at Cadiz, south of the Portuguese capital. The attack on Cadiz was hard fought as the British laid siege to the important harbour for weeks. The Spanish were resolute in their defence and at one point Nelson's ship was boarded. The British crew fended off the invaders and Nelson was saved by his coxswain, John Sykes, who parried a cutlass that was about to strike him.

Eventually, the attack on the strategically important Cadiz had to be called off, as it was obvious that it was getting nowhere. It was a humiliating failure for the Royal Navy, but the blockade of the port was still in place, so there were some crumbs of comfort for the British.

Public admiration and rising stock

There would be no rest for Nelson as another face-off against the Spanish wasn't far away. The Battle of Santa Cruz de Tenerife looked good for the British on paper, but would



The Danes fought hard at the Battle of Copenhagen but were eventually worn down by Nelson, who had directly disobeyed orders, by continuing the attack

become the worst possible start for the new rear admiral and perhaps the worst defeat of his career. The objective was to capture Spanish treasure ships anchored in Tenerife, and a surprise attack of seven ships on the settlement of Santa Cruz was planned for 21 July 1797. This was foiled, but Nelson soldiered on, changing his focus of attack to the harbour. Under heavy fire from the Spanish defences, the men that landed on the island were pinned down and not making any progress. The attack was a disaster and Nelson himself suffered another war wound, as a stray grapeshot shattered his right elbow. After his arm was strapped up by Josiah, it was amputated by the ship's surgeon, Thomas Eshelby, and would be an everlasting reminder of his failure.

The injury kept Nelson out of action for a significant portion of time as he returned to England to rest up. His wife nursed him back to health, but his arm was beyond repair and would now cause the rear admiral pain every day of his life. The great victory at St Vincent still lingered in the public's mind though, and

while he was back on British shores, Nelson was honoured as the hero of the battle. This public admiration didn't go unnoticed, and he was given the Order of the Bath by King George III on 27 September 1797. By the time he had recovered, Nelson longed to be at sea again and was thrust into action almost immediately.

The Battle of the Nile was one of Nelson's most famous victories. In the spring of 1798, the earl of St Vincent had ordered him to closely monitor the French fleet that was making tentative yet threatening moves off the coast of Egypt. Aboard HMS Vanguard, Nelson set off in pursuit of the Marine Nationale. The two navies eventually met just east of Alexandria in August 1798. Napoleon was intent on accessing the Suez Canal and controlling the trade routes to India, but the British had other ideas. The comprehensive victory dealt to the French left their armies stranded as their campaign faltered. Nelson received a three-inch wound on his forehead above his right eye, joining a growing list of battle scars.

NELSON'S EARLY LIFE

The great naval commanders of the Napoleonic era who competed with Nelson for control of the seas



François-Paul Brueys d'Aigalliers

The French commander at the Battle of the Nile, d'Aigalliers had risen through the ranks to become Nelson's

equal in the French Navy. His defensive tactics lost out to the British at the battle of the Nile and he died aboard his flagship, Orient



Peter Willemoes

Although only a teenager at the Battle of Copenhagen, Willemoes is remembered for his great courage

during the conflict that impressed even Nelson, who commended him to the king of Denmark, Frederick VI, after the battle.



Pierre-Charles Villeneuve

Perhaps his most famous opponent, Villeneuve was a constant thorn in Nelson's side. After leading him

out of the Channel and into the Atlantic, he faced off against the British at Trafalgar but lost out on that day to a superior Royal Navy.



Cuthbert Collingwood

The forgotten man of Trafalgar, Lord Collingwood took control of the British fleet as Nelson lay

dying and steered the British forces to a crucial victory. He would continue to serve the Royal Navy as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Fleet.

Despite the victory, operations in the Mediterranean were far from over, and after a successful blockade and recapture of Naples in 1799, Nelson was ordered to sail to Minorca. This was where the Admiralty felt the next threat from Napoleon lay, but Nelson disagreed and refused to leave Naples. In the end, he was correct in his assumption, but such blatant disobedience (and his reported acceptance of the dukedom of Bronte in Sicily from King Ferdinand IV) left the Royal Navy elite with no choice but to send him home.

Assaults in the Baltic

The exile didn't last long before Nelson was needed again. By 1801, the War of the Second Coalition was winding down as the Austrian Empire laid down its arms to French rule. Russia too was abandoning the coalition and initiated the League of Armed Neutrality to protect its interests in the Baltic. The British didn't take too kindly to this, and responded in force against the Danes (who were in league with the new Russian policy) at the Battle of Copenhagen in April. It would become known as one of Nelson's hardest-fought battles. After the resounding victory on the Nile, Nelson was again entrusted with command, operating under the watchful yet relaxed eye of admiral and commander-in-chief, Sir Hyde Parker.

The battle began the next day and was fiercely fought from the start. The ships *Agamemnon*, *Bellona* and *Russell* were all grounded as the British vessels did battle with both the formidable Danish *Trekroner* fort and the treacherous shallow water.

After three hours, the British gunnery began to slowly but surely turn the tide on the strong Danish fortifications. However, the notoriously cautious Parker was alarmed by the lack of progression and called for an immediate withdrawal. Signalling to Nelson's flagship *HMS Elephant*, a retreat was called. Risking his career as well as the lives of his men, Nelson acknowledged the signal but did not repeat it to the rest of the fleet. He then took his telescope to his blind eye and remarked: "I really did not see the signal."

Buoyed by his rebellious streak, the rest of the British fleet (except for *HMS Amazon*, whose captain Edward Riou was killed when attempting to retreat) rallied and the battle restarted. The losses were heavy, but within an hour Nelson's gamble had paid off and the Royal Navy emerged victorious. 6,000 Danes were dead, six times more than the casualties the British recorded. A 24-hour ceasefire was called and the Royal Navy was ready for more assaults on the League of Armed Neutrality. However, shortly after Copenhagen, Tsar Paul was betrayed by his military officials and

"BOTH SIDES KNEW THAT TRAFALGAR WOULD GO A LONG WAY IN DECIDING THE FATE OF THE WAR OF THE THIRD COALITION"

assassinated, ending the threat of Russia. Snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, Nelson was showered with praise after the battle and was elevated to commander-in-chief in place of the recalled Parker and promoted to viscount. At long last, he had the position he dreamed of and had craved so much.

Nelson's first move as viscount was an attack on the French positions at Boulogne. Britain was fearful of a French invasion and an attack on the naval base at the port would deter these plans. The operation, in which Nelson did not take part personally, was a failure, and any future attempts were scuppered by the Treaty of Amiens, which gave peace to the two empires in March 1802.

The truce lasted all of 14 months as hostilities were renewed between the two nations. Nelson, now aboard *HMS Victory*, enforced a loose blockade on several French-held ports, encouraging the French to come out and fight. The strategy, although risky, succeeded when a convoy under the leadership of Admiral Pierre-Charles Villeneuve bolted from Toulon and a chase to the Caribbean and back ensued. Nelson's preoccupation with Villeneuve worked in Napoleon's favour, as a significant amount of the Royal Navy was now out of position and unable to protect Britain's shoreline. The 350,000-strong Grande Armée was preparing for an invasion of southern England, but the Royal Navy returned in time to face off against the combined Franco-Spanish fleet in southern Spain in a headland off Cadiz known as Cape Trafalgar.

The final battle

Both sides knew that Trafalgar would go a long way in deciding the fate of the War of the Third Coalition. The Royal Navy looked to Nelson and *HMS Victory* for inspiration. The vice admiral had drilled his subordinates meticulously, so the minimum of tactical consultation would be required in the heat of battle. Nelson's 47th birthday was also celebrated shortly before the battle, during which he wined and dined 15 of his captains who would be leading the fleet at Trafalgar. He talked of how a combination of British

spirit and gunnery expertise would lead them to victory. The traditional rigid tactics of yesteryear were done away with and the Franco-Spanish line would be broken by two British divisions, one led by Nelson and one led by Lord Cuthbert Collingwood.

Victory was in the thick of the action from the very start and the cavalier tactics were paying off as the British fleet gained the upper hand. However, the great commanders of history more often than not live and die by the sword. In the early afternoon of the battle, a French sniper perched in the rigging of the mast of *Redoutable* spotted Nelson pacing along the quarterdeck of his ship. He was struck through the shoulder by a musket ball that lodged into his spine. Immediately carried below deck, there was little the ship's doctor could do with this mortal wound. As the battle raged on, the Royal Navy emerged victorious, but Nelson slowly slipped away.

The vice admiral's body was taken back to Britain after being soaked in a barrel of brandy that acted as a preservative. A full state funeral was held in London as the streets filled with people weeping at the sight of the coffin. King George was equally grief stricken and burst into tears upon hearing the news.

Horatio Nelson was buried in St Paul's Cathedral and his legacy lives on in a series of monuments erected in his honour. This was one man who definitely did his duty.



An imagined portrait of Nelson in his vice-admiral uniform prior to the Battle of Trafalgar



NAPOLEON VS WELLINGTON

The epic story of two warriors and their personal battle that would decide the fate of empires



As the smoke from cannon and musket fire over the fields of Waterloo lifted, the fate of Europe had been decided. Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, had defeated his nemesis, Napoleon Bonaparte – who had single-handedly plunged Europe into war.

Sitting on his horse, looking out as the Sun was setting on a landscape of the dead, dying and wounded, Wellington felt neither triumph nor joy. Rather, a sense of disappointment surrounded the leader who'd overseen the destruction of Napoleon's war machine. In grim reflection the general declared, "Damn the fellow, he is a mere pounder after all!" Napoleon's reputation had preceeded him and it was found wanting. Everything Wellington had heard about Napoleon – his tactical genius, his skill in manoeuvring, his ability to read the battlefield – had all turned out to be false. He was merely a pounder, one who just threw more and more men onto British guns to be shot down. Their rivalry had killed thousands, their personalities had fascinated and repulsed each other in equal measure. But which of these great military commanders would really best the other in terms of legacy?

Oddly enough the two had never met in battle before Waterloo, but their lives had transcended through coincidence and circumstance in the years leading up to

1815. Both men were born in the same year and would be seen as outcasts by their countrymen, Wellington growing up in Ireland, Napoleon in Corsica – far from the cosmopolitan power hubs of Britain and France, respectively.

Wellington was luckier however; his family was rich and had connections. He could afford

"BOTH MEN WERE BORN IN THE SAME YEAR AND WOULD BE SEEN AS OUTCASTS BY THEIR COUNTRYMEN"

to be sent to private school and to buy himself a commission in the army. He continued up the ranks by buying authority, an approach viewed favourably by his family who often regarded him as a 'dreamy, idle and shy lad' – a far cry from the warrior that history remembers.

Napoleon, on the other hand, could not afford such a prestigious position so quickly. His family was awarded enough money for him to attend a school in Autun, France, and then a military academy where his first command was an artillery detachment; it was a stark contrast to the glamorous assignments in India Wellington enjoyed.

This was the classic story of the noble gaining rewards through connections, while the

impoverished bourgeoisie struggled, through hard work, to gain recognition and it would dominate the two men's ideologies in later life. Wellington's formative years had made him reliant on the establishment and the noble network of patronage, while Napoleon was a child of enlightenment ideals, acquiring worth through hard graft and the need for recognition for all he had gained. Both men were ambitious but this ambition was funnelled through different class backgrounds: one emphasising establishment, the other a new and changing world view.

Revolution, radical upheaval and the guillotine would force them to pick sides in the wars that were spreading like wildfire across Europe. Napoleon witnessed the French mob overrunning the royal family's palace at Tuileries, murdering the Swiss Guards as they surrendered. As the mob tore the palace apart, he marvelled at the power of the French people at their most motivated; he would make sure that the soldiers in his armies never lost this idealistic enthusiasm. To Napoleon the French Revolution was the hope for 'right thinkers' and the 'centuries of feudal barbarism and political slavery' would end in France as the light of liberty swept through the nation.

Wellington took an opposing view, noting in his diary: 'the Revolution, as it is called... has rather augmented the evil by bringing forward into public employment of importance, more

inexperienced people... entirely incompatible with the nature of their business'. To him, the French Revolution and the terror that followed represented what would happen in Britain if society did not keep the man on the street in check. These views would harden as France rejected monarchical power for ever, Napoleon embracing the new regime as the next step in civilisation, while Wellington speculated that it would destroy civilised society.

The radical ideals instilled in Napoleon in his early life came to the fore during the years of military campaign. He grew tired of the corrupt nature of the French directorate which took over from the monarchy, declaring himself consul and then emperor in 1804. His ambition and fiery personality shattered countries and brought forth a new order – his order. The men serving under him loved his grandstanding and followed 'him cheerfully barefooted, and without provisions. Such was the enthusiasm, or rather the fanaticism, which Napoleon could inspire among his troops', as memoirs from his German campaigns recorded.

Wellington fought him by proxy, through his armies in Spain and, reflecting his desire for established order, drilled and flogged his ragtag army of demoralised British, Portuguese and Spanish troops turning them into a force that could win battles. It was two very different command styles and publicly the leaders would sneer and berate each other.

Napoleon would bite at Wellington's early career in India claiming that he was nothing more than a 'sepoy general', good at looking grand in exotic palaces but not at much else. While his adversary would lambaste Napoleon as a dictator claiming that everything he did

carried an element of meanness. He ridiculed Napoleon's power claiming that 'Napoleon's power stands upon corruption, that he has no [admirers] in France but the principal officers of his army'.

In private and to select friends, however, these explosive attitudes were very different. After the Battle of Toulouse in 1814, Napoleon complimented the military talents of Wellington and the bravery of his troops to a select group of officers. For Wellington the emotions ran deeper still, acquiring a huge bust of Napoleon so he could look him in the eyes during his years in England. He commented, "I would at any time rather have heard that a reinforcement of 40,000 men had joined the French army, than that he had arrived to take command." This mix of emotions betrays a fascination that both men held for each other – the radical differences in political and ideological beliefs attracting both to comment on one another's actions, even to the point where Wellington felt he needed to be around his opponent at all times, making space in his home for his rival – albeit a plaster likeness.

Love and romantic intrigue was never far away from dashing military officers commanding the armies of empires. The personal lives of both the generals presented a mixture of triumphs and defeats as dramatic as any of their exploits on the battlefield; their love life also had a lasting influence on them personally.

Wellington married out of duty to a woman he had previously confessed his love to, Catherine Pakenham, in 1806. Wellington found his wife's depressive nature and her inability to keep track of her spending extremely

frustrating. Given his tight-lipped nature, he quickly became estranged from her and, as rumour would have it, took a mistress – Harriet Arbuthnot. Arbuthnot later commented on a portrait of Wellington in civilian clothes describing it as something others rarely saw – a 'softness and sweetness of countenance'. If Wellington was in love though, he rarely let his passions show, especially in public.

As the polar opposite to this hard outward exterior, Napoleon – now in post-revolutionary France – married his sweetheart, Joséphine de Beauharnais. Napoleon loved his new wife fiercely; it was said that few women possessed more charm and his love letters were famously graphic for the time. In one passionate exchange he pledged to give her a thousand kisses, but he tells Joséphine to 'give me none, for they fire my blood'.

A commentator speculated that one of the main factors that drove his aggressive nature in battle was to impress her through his military skill. This love was not to last, however. In a painful exchange of letters to his brother sent when he was on campaign in Egypt, he discovered that Joséphine was being unfaithful. When he heard the news he convulsed and banged his fists against his head, leading him to become despondent about life and the people around him. He divorced in 1810, after a string of mistresses that were designed to exact revenge on Joséphine's betrayal. The lovesick Napoleon found little consolation in his second wife, Marie-Louise Archduchess of Austria, who he would describe as 'a walking womb' for political advancement.

Both men were unlucky in love, but there is a critical difference: Napoleon's personal life almost destroyed his ambition and shook him to his very core, whereas Wellington kept his emotions in check, befitting his very English upbringing.

Military defeats, political setbacks and the invasion of France by Britain and its allies forced Napoleon to abdicate his throne and be exiled to Elba, a small island in the Mediterranean. A few days before he left for Elba, he wrote a letter to the woman he had never stopped loving, Joséphine: 'Never forget him who never forgot, and who never will forget you'.

This was a man who was reflecting on his defeats and heartbreak. As a final humiliation he was allowed to keep the title of emperor – emperor of a tiny Mediterranean island with a population numbering no more than 12,000. Joséphine never visited him on Elba; she would die in 1814 while Napoleon was in exile, compounding his woe. He kept himself busy ushering in a number of reforms on the island for the benefit of its populace, but often he

Young Napoleon and his rise to fame at the Battle of Aboukir, 1799



WELLINGTON'S MILITARY MASTERPIECE: THE BATTLE OF SALAMANCA

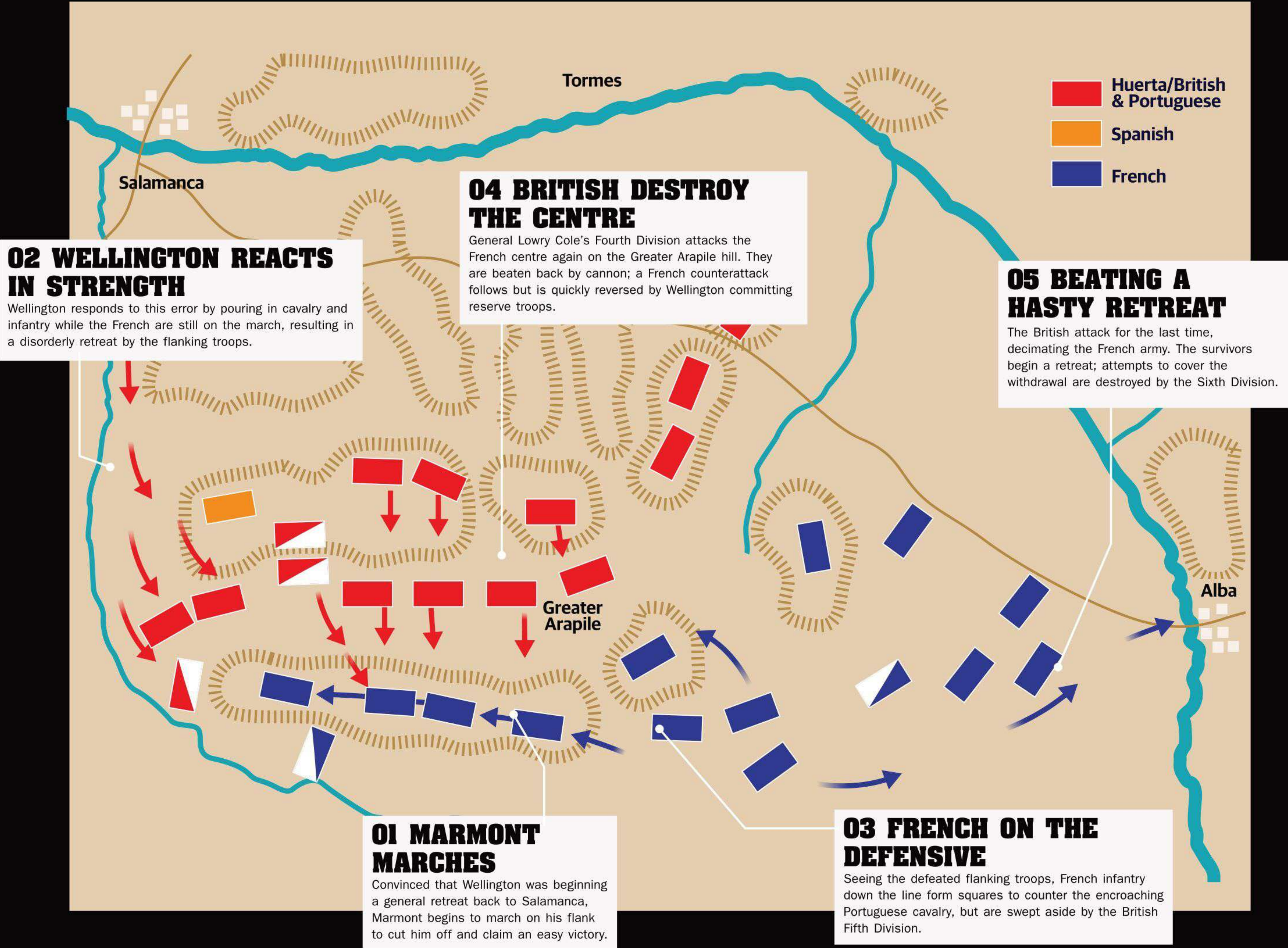
Wellington at the
Battle of Salamanca



The Battle of Salamanca was fought in the fog of war, the endless cannon and musket fire patching the air with thick black smoke. It was a battle that exemplified Wellington's ability in the attack and put to rest the rumours that he was the master of the defensive battle only.

By 1812 Wellington had crossed over the Portuguese border capturing the Spanish town of Salamanca. A French army under Marshal Auguste-Frédéric de Marmont was waiting. Wary of the French numbers, Wellington waited for them to make the first move. In a critical miscalculation, Marmont mistook the British baggage train moving back as a general retreat. Too eager to claim Salamanca for his emperor, he shifted his forces to swing round to the west in an attempt to cut off the British before they fell back.

Wellington seized his opportunity, ordering a huge assault on the head of the flanking French forces, while they were still marching into position. The French were stunned, hundreds cut down from sabre wounds or shot. At the same time the French divisions facing Wellington in the centre had become dangerously weak because of the shift west. Wellington ordered another assault on their positions, causing the French to pull back with cavalry crashing down on the survivors. Panic swept across the French line, while divisions on the right held on; the French command – including Marmont himself – had been wounded in the attack. Confusion reigned until a French counterattack was beaten back forcing the French to retreat. It was a battle that more than proved Wellington's martial abilities.



NAPOLEON'S MILITARY MASTERPIECE: THE BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ

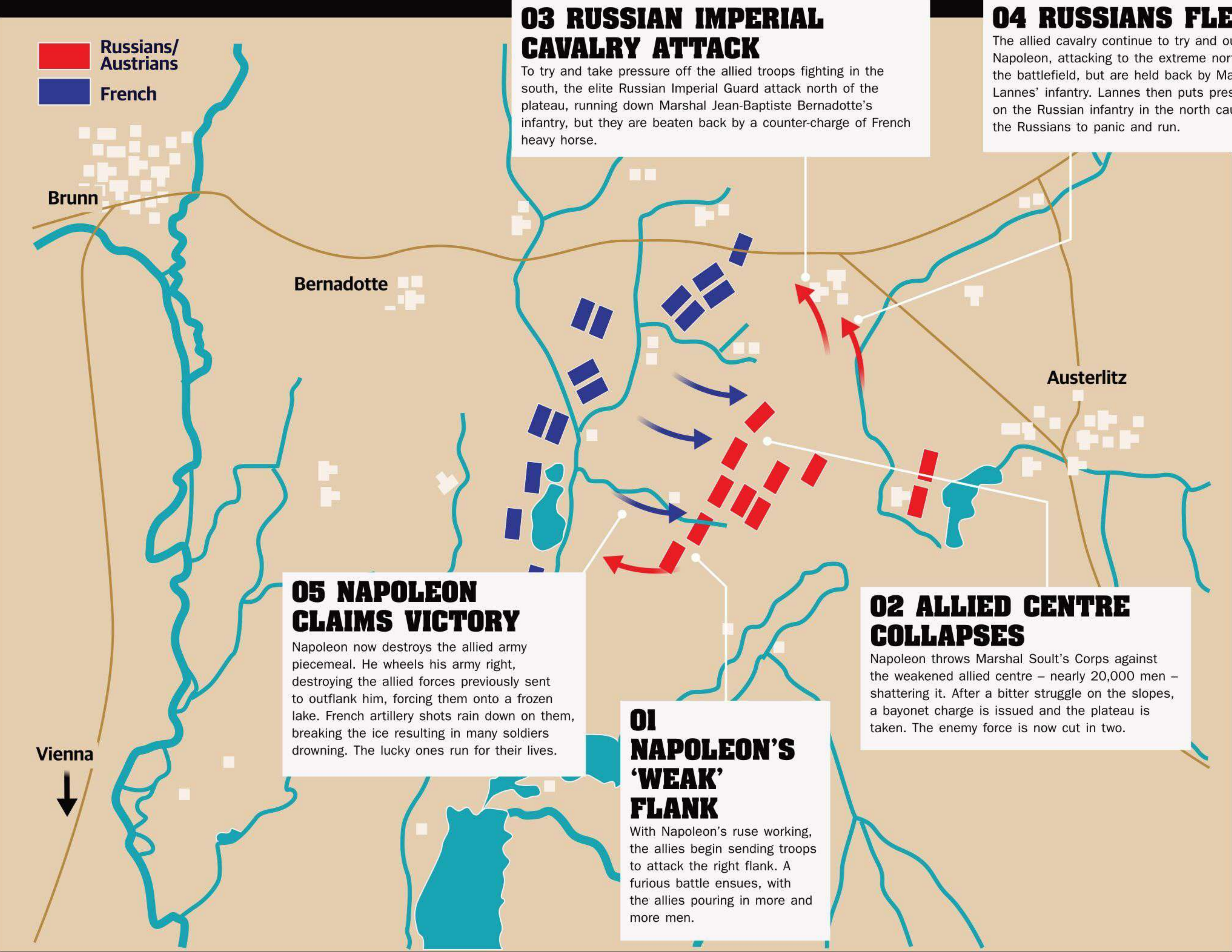
The Battle of Austerlitz was a masterclass in deception and manoeuvre. In the winter of 1805 Napoleon's Grande Armée faced off against the combined might of the emperor of Russia, Alexander I, and General Karl Mack, Baron von Leiberich of Austria. The three armies met near Austerlitz for a showdown in arms. The Russian and Austrian allies occupied the Pratzen Plateau to act as their central position and, after receiving intelligence that Napoleon's flank was weak, they struck south, towards the French right to cut them off from Vienna.

This attack was repulsed by a French force in strength – something the allies were not expecting. As the allies threw in more men to reinforce the southern attack, the allied position on the plateau started to weaken from the drain in manpower. Napoleon was

overjoyed; it was all going according to plan. By making the enemy command think his flank was weak, the allies were funnelling troops away from the strategically vital plateau leaving it open to attack.

The ensuing French assault was so ferocious that it sent the allies into a panic, shattering their line and cutting the allied army in half. Repeated attacks north of the plateau could not push the French away from the central position, leaving Napoleon to clean up. In blind panic, allied soldiers originally sent to flank Napoleon ran over the frozen ponds south of their positions as French artillery fire broke the ice. Many of the wounded were trampled and drowned in the icy waters. It was a masterstroke of deception, Napoleon essentially using his own flank as bait to draw his opponents to their deaths.

Napoleon at the Battle of Austerlitz



launched into vicious tirades and depressive rants, saying that his generals had betrayed him, that he had trusted the wrong people, that he had lost everything.

By contrast, Wellington was triumphant. He travelled to Paris having been made a duke and, in a show of power, was appointed the British ambassador to France. He took in the delights of Paris – now an exciting, free city, met his mistress in romantic Parisian suburbs and was lauded as a true British hero at home. He continued to write his memoirs, but grew tired of journalists and authors, especially when rumours circulated about his private life.

It was the confidence that Wellington gained after 1814 and the depressive self-reflection that Napoleon went through on Elba that would dictate the epic battle that would leave one of them standing victorious a year later.

After sensing that the restored royal power in France was weakening, Napoleon decided to roll the dice one last time in an attempt to

take ultimate power. In a daring escape he slipped away from his guards and, with help from his loyal followers, sailed to the French mainland for a final reckoning with Wellington. At Waterloo, the personalities, the war of words, the endless studying and critiquing of each other's abilities came to bear in the heat of battle. Napoleon believed totally in his troops; his soldiers had conquered everything in the early years of that century and, in his eyes, this battle should have been no different. Yet at Waterloo his judgement was impaired; there was no signature masterstroke as seen at Austerlitz in 1805. The year in exile, the loss of his beloved Joséphine and the trauma of losing his empire had finally broken his ability to read the battlefield, causing the edifice of his military genius to crumble.

His physical health was also frail after the stresses of the last ten years; he was suffering from crippling stomach pain which prevented him from ordering his troops clearly. Instead

of attacking straight away he dithered, initially afraid to lose his army which was the only thing giving him legitimacy. He then changed his mind, committing himself to head-on attacks into British muskets and cannon. Rather than being in control of his ambition he was blinded by it – his lust to win and regain his power overriding his skills in directing the battle.

Wellington described Waterloo as a 'pounding match', but Wellington was wrong. Napoleon was not merely a pounder; it was his personal defeats taking their toll. He was a desperate man – desperate to silence his critics and become emperor again – no matter the cost. Wellington took advantage of his adversary's unhinged emotional state. He had the confidence, having defeated the troops of Napoleon before, he had the charisma having gained glory and fame in England after liberating Portugal and Spain, and he had the hard-nosed will to win. In the end the Iron Duke's steady, iron temperament had outlasted the reckless, up-and-down personality of Napoleon. Like a tragic character in a Greek epic, Napoleon had claimed his empire, had been defeated and now suffered indignity in enforced exile – this time for good. His ambition had ultimately bested him, losing to a man who had never overplayed his hand in his quest for power. The former emperor's bitterness was chronicled in his memoirs which he wrote during his time on the Atlantic island of St Helena, claiming that Wellington's plan at Waterloo 'will not in the eyes of the historian reflect any credit on Lord Wellington as a general... [H]is plan did not show talent.' He did, however, praise the bravery and firmness of Wellington's troops.

On the surface, it would be easy for Wellington to claim the strongest legacy given the victories he achieved and dismiss Napoleon as nothing more than a sore loser. Yet Wellington's triumphs only gave to him what British society would allow him to gain. In the end his political career after Waterloo fell to pieces because the establishment – which he had given his lifeblood to protect – no longer tolerated him. Napoleon had created from scratch his own establishment in the form of his European empire which, at its height, stretched from Spain to the gates of Moscow. His lust for life and liberty, plus his passion for a better world that he would preside over, were his *raison d'être*. He once said that the invasion of Russia would make him 'master of the world'. Not content to be handed what others were willing to give him, Napoleon wanted the world for himself. His power wasn't to last, but nevertheless his ambition presents a striking image of aspiration since through sheer force of will he fought to have it all.

Napoleon was not only fighting the British at Waterloo, but the Seventh Coalition which comprised Dutch, Belgian, Prussian and German troops too



HEAD TO HEAD: LEADERSHIP

Comparing two of history's greatest leaders

It goes without saying that both Napoleon and Wellington had considerable command ability and the military skill of these men changed the course of history, but their approach differed considerably. Wellington was renowned for his reliance on strict discipline – something which he saw as the key to victory. He once commented in 1813 that his troops were the 'scum of the Earth', unmotivated and little more than criminals which he would train and drill, turning them into heroes. To the average British soldier he was a terrifying figure and life within his army was a harsh routine of endless drills, training and floggings. While Wellington may have

gained prestige as a great general in the palaces of government, his men would not thank him for their experiences. By contrast to this iron discipline, Napoleon preferred to grandiose himself in front of his troops to inspire them to great deeds of courage. The French soldier – already stirred by the great events of the French Revolution – would cheer and chant "Vive l'Empereur!" during army reviews – the passionate, hot-blooded nature of Napoleon standing in contrast to the cold, conservative nature of Wellington's stiff upper lip. Napoleon would capitalise on this enthusiasm through many a conquest with his adoring and loyal troops.

LEE

VS

America's greatest generals
clash in the fierce fight for their
country's soul



On 12 April 1861, troops from the seceding state of South Carolina opened fire on Federal government-held Fort Sumter, sparking the American Civil War. Soon, several other Southern states joined South Carolina in secession, seeking to preserve the institution of slavery by withdrawing from the Union and forming the Confederate States of America. Abraham Lincoln, 16th president of the United States of America, was resolved to bring the wayward states back, even by force. In the enormous struggle that ensued, the largest and deadliest ever to be waged on American soil, Union and Confederate armies would be led by two extraordinary soldiers, Ulysses S Grant and Robert E Lee, who in their origins and personalities could not have been more different from each other, except for their ferocious dedication to victory.

Born in January 1807 in Virginia, Robert E Lee was the son of Henry 'Light Horse Harry', a cavalry commander from the colony of Virginia who had achieved renown in the American War of Independence. Military service was part of the heritage of the Lee family, and the young man was admitted to United States Military Academy at West Point as part of the class of 1829. Lee

**"IT IS WELL THAT WAR IS SO
TERRIBLE, OTHERWISE WE
SHOULD GROW TOO FOND OF IT"**

Lee to General Longstreet at the Battle
of Fredericksburg, 11 December 1862

GRANT

seemed destined for great things, and played a role in one of the more notable episodes of the immediate pre-civil war era.

In October 1859, John Brown, a fanatical abolitionist, and 21 of his followers had seized the Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. His plan was to give the firearms within to slaves and foment an insurrection. This plot failed when a group of US Marines, under the command of US Army Lieutenant Colonel Lee, appeared on the scene and quashed the raiders, killing ten and capturing most of the rest, including Brown.

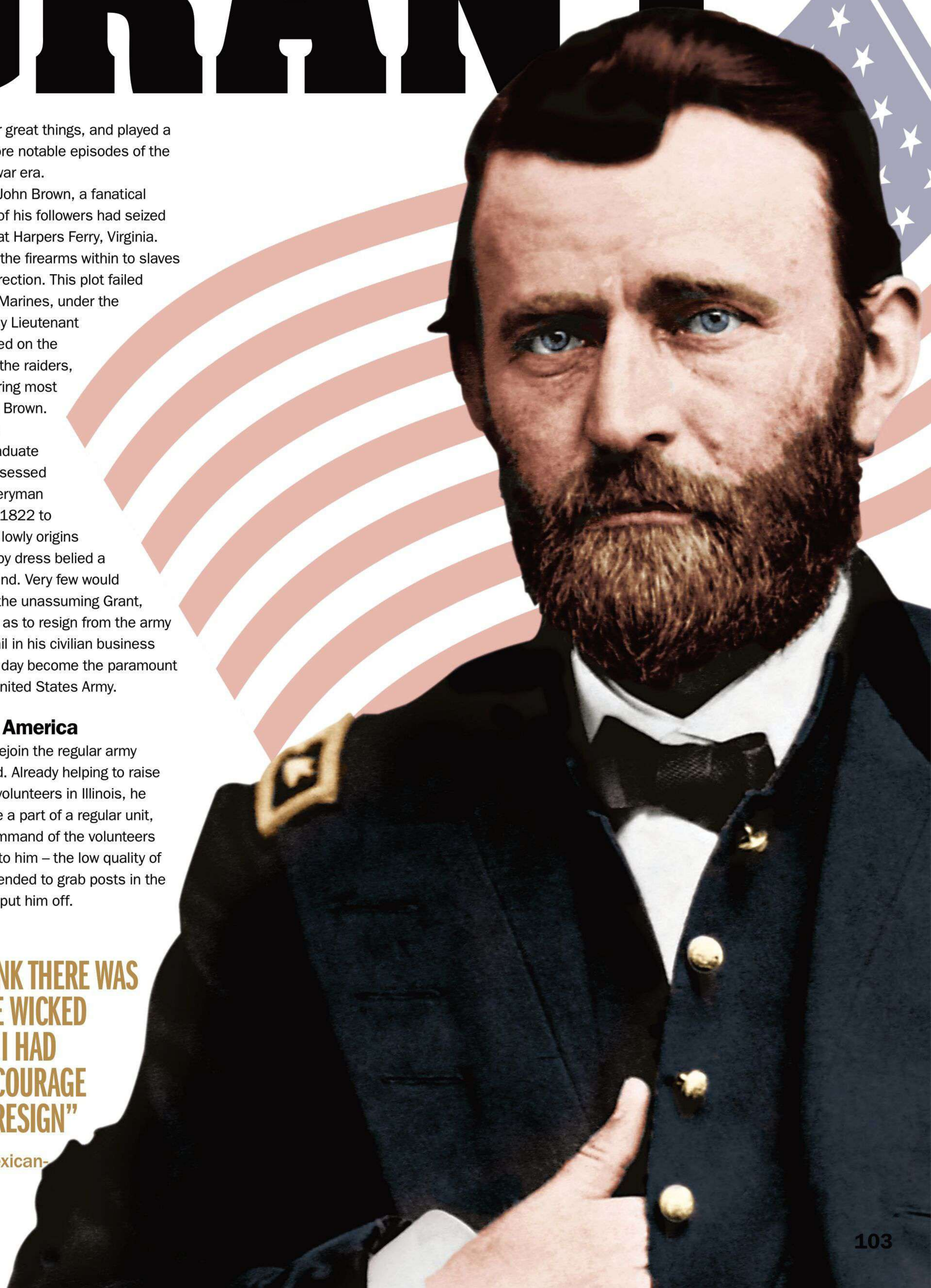
By contrast, Lee's fellow West Point graduate Ulysses S Grant possessed an unexceptional everyman quality. Born in April 1822 to a tanner in Ohio, his lowly origins and reportedly shabby dress belied a careful, analytical mind. Very few would have predicted that the unassuming Grant, who had gone so far as to resign from the army in 1854, and then fail in his civilian business ventures, would one day become the paramount commander of the United States Army.

War comes to America

Grant was eager to rejoin the regular army after the war erupted. Already helping to raise a company of state volunteers in Illinois, he much preferred to be a part of a regular unit, and turned down command of the volunteers when it was offered to him – the low quality of the politicians who tended to grab posts in the volunteer regiments put him off.

“I DO NOT THINK THERE WAS EVER A MORE WICKED WAR... ONLY I HAD NOT MORAL COURAGE ENOUGH TO RESIGN”

Grant on the Mexican-American War



LEGENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

On 24 May 1861, he penned a letter to the army requesting reinstatement. Grant would be given a commission in the regular army as a brigadier general, and made commander of the district of south-east Missouri. In February 1861, he scored the first real victory of the war for the Union by capturing rebel-held Fort Donelson on the Mississippi in Tennessee.

For his part, Lee was displeased with the Southern move toward secession, which he thought disastrous. He was forced to choose between his cherished Virginia home state and his country. Lee had even been marked out for the command of a Federal army being formed to return the secessionist states back under US control, but he still chose Virginia.

When his state voted to secede, Lee resigned from the US Army, saying that he “could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States.” By then he had served in the army, including his time at West Point, for some 35 years.

General Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia

The South would have to fight an uphill battle, but it was not without advantages. At the start of the war, its soldiers were more motivated and

The first major battle of the civil war, the First Battle of Bull Run, was a Confederate victory



MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

The precursor to civil war allowed Lee and Grant to cut their teeth on the battlefield

The USA's war with Mexico, from 1846-48, had its origins in the question of the annexation of Texas. The state had won its independence from Mexico in April 1836 at the Battle of San Jacinto, in which Sam Houston and 800 Texans defeated a Mexican army under President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Texas wanted to be admitted into the United States, and US President James K Polk was a firm believer in the USA's 'manifest destiny' to increase its territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He strongly favoured the annexation of Texas, and this was accomplished in 1845 by a resolution of Congress. But Mexico had other ideas, and had never truly reconciled itself to the loss of what it considered rightfully to be one of its own provinces. In April

1846, Mexico declared war on the USA after an American army commanded by General Zachary Taylor crossed the Texas border. The US Congress declared war on Mexico that May, but many anti-slavery elements in the North saw it as a naked attempt to win more slave territory.

Taylor moved south rapidly, and won a succession of victories over tough Mexican opposition at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma and Monterrey that year. In February 1847, a strong Mexican army under Santa Anna was defeated by Taylor at the Battle of Buena Vista. Also in 1847, US forces under General Winfield Scott captured the port of Veracruz, and marched inland to Mexico City, which they reached in August 1847. Along the way, Scott

met and defeated Santa Anna at Cerro Gordo that April, with victory owed in no small part to the reconnaissance performed by Captain Robert E Lee, who discovered a route around the Mexican rear. Scott was effusive in his praise of Lee, calling him “the very best officer that I ever saw in the field.” Ulysses S Grant, in the meantime, had been a supply officer with Taylor at the war's start, and then had accompanied Scott in his assault on Mexico City, where he fought bravely in taking enemy breastworks guarding the city. By September 1847, Mexico City had fallen to Scott, and the war was ended by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in February 1848, which saw the US take half of Mexico's territory.



After the storming of Chapultepec, Mexico City was occupied by American forces



AT WEST POINT

The USA's top military academy schooled men in the art of war

The United States Military Academy was established at West Point, New York, by President Thomas Jefferson to provide the young nation with professional officers educated in the military sciences. From then until the outbreak of civil war, West Point produced many of the USA's most illustrious soldiers.

While at West Point, an institution with notably strict discipline, Lee managed to graduate without even one demerit for an infraction of its disciplinary code during his four years there, a rarity among cadets. He graduated in second place in his class, and this enabled him to obtain a commission in the army's much sought-after Corps of Engineers.

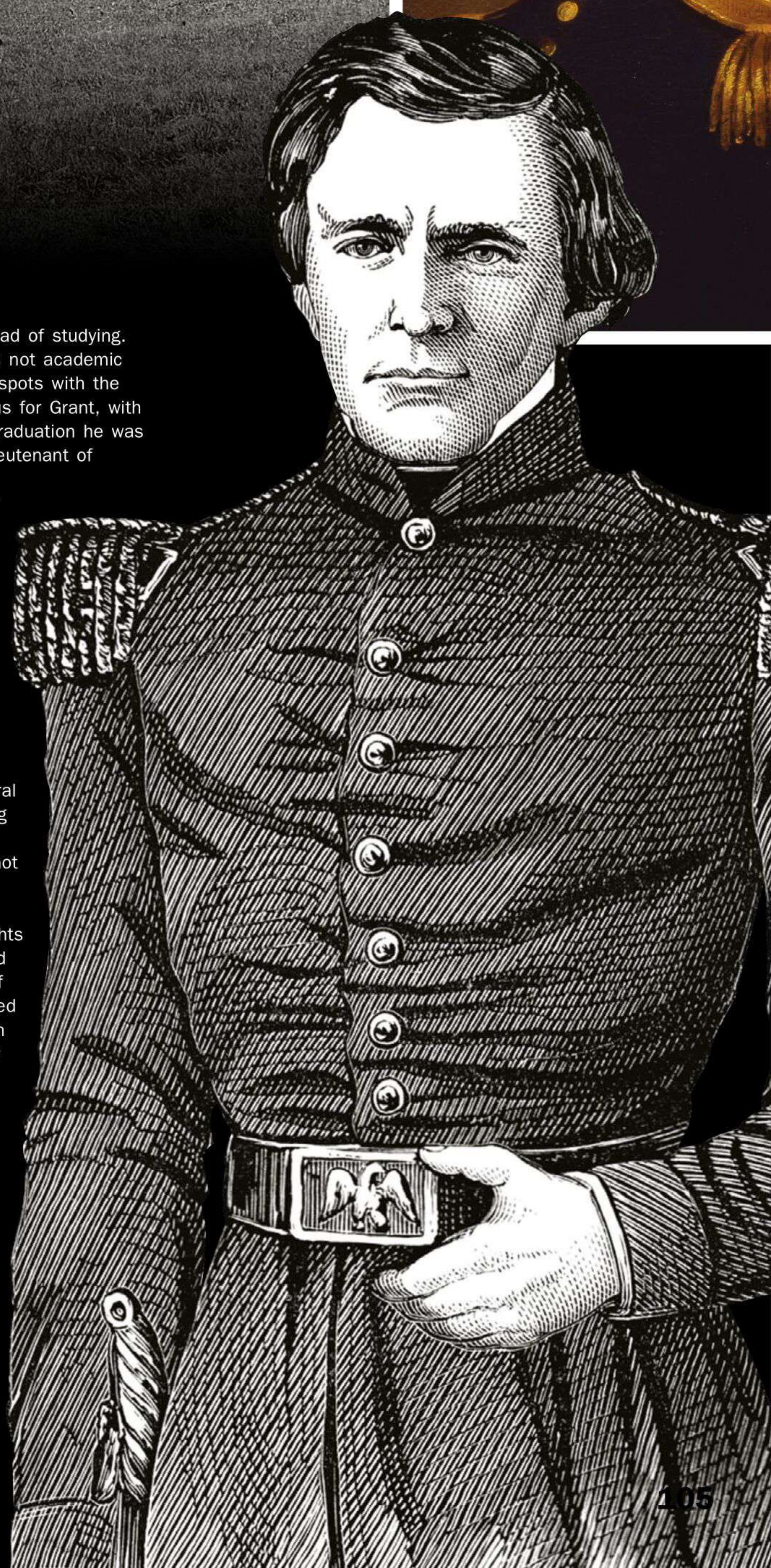
After exemplary service in Mexico, which garnered him no fewer than three brevet promotions in 1847, Lee would busy himself constructing fortifications. But Lee's military reputation was so high that he was brought back by the academy in 1852 to become its superintendent. Lee would bring his wife, Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee, along with their seven children, to the Point when he took up his duties there.

Grant's time at the Point was a different matter entirely. He was never confident of his chances of making it through the academy's gruelling curriculum, but went anyway because he thought it would give him a chance to travel and see the USA's biggest cities, which then were New York and Philadelphia. "A military life had no charms for me, and I had not the faintest idea of staying in the army if I should be graduated, which I did not expect," he said.

As a member of the class of 1843, Grant was an undistinguished student, and he wasted a good

deal of his time reading novels instead of studying. His best subject, horsemanship, was not academic at all. Obtaining one of the coveted spots with the Corps of Engineers was too ambitious for Grant, with his mediocre grades, and so upon graduation he was commissioned as a brevet second lieutenant of the infantry.

Though Lee and Grant were never at West Point at the same time, their paths would cross in Mexico, albeit not on the battlefield. On one occasion, an unkempt and dust-covered Brevet Captain Grant went to General Winfield Scott's headquarters to make his report. His appearance was so poor that he was scolded by one of Scott's staff officers, none other than Lee. "I feel it is my duty, captain," Lee said, "to call your attention to General Scott's order that an officer reporting to headquarters should be in full uniform." Though this was perhaps not the warmest of encounters between two men who would go on to hold such important commands, it highlights one of the central tragedies spawned by Southern secession. Graduates of West Point, many of whom had served side by side in the Mexican-American War, would fight against one another in the civil war.



"WHILE AT WEST POINT LEE MANAGED TO GRADUATE WITHOUT EVEN ONE DEMERIT FOR AN INFRACTION OF ITS DISCIPLINARY CODE DURING HIS FOUR YEARS THERE, A RARITY AMONG CADETS"

LEGENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

its officer corps displayed far more talent on the battlefield, especially at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, which was an entirely one-sided Southern victory.

Not least among these officers was Lee himself, who had been serving as Confederate President Jefferson Davis’s military adviser since early 1862. His future opponent commanding the Army of the Potomac, Major General George B McClellan, was an able trainer of soldiers but was also extremely cautious and lacked vigour in the field. Davis placed Lee in command of the Army of Northern Virginia on 1 June 1862, after its previous commander, General Joseph Johnston, had been wounded in battle.

Few appointments to command have been of more importance. Though greatly outnumbered by McClellan, Lee attacked him again and again, and in what became known as the Seven Days Battles in June-July 1862, drove the larger Army of the Potomac away from the Confederate

capital of Richmond, Virginia. At the Second Battle of Bull Run on 30 August, he hurled the Union Army of Virginia under General John Pope back towards Washington.

Lee next took the Army of Northern Virginia into Union territory. On 17 September, he fought McClellan to a standstill at Antietam, Maryland, where both sides took horrendous casualties in the civil war’s bloodiest single day. President Lincoln became so disgusted with McClellan’s dithering failure to pursue Lee after the battle that he removed him from command in November 1862 and replaced him with Major General Ambrose Burnside.

Lee retreated back to Virginia, but though he had badly bloodied the Federals, Lincoln also got something he had long been waiting for: Antietam had been a victory, at least of a sort, and Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that all slaves in rebel territory were now free. Though real

freedom for the slaves of the South would be a long time in coming, the president had reframed the conflict into one in which the Union now had moral superiority over the slave-holding states of the rebellious Confederacy.

It helped Lee that his opponents were not of his calibre. He humiliated Burnside at Fredericksburg on 13 December, and then devastated Hooker’s army at Chancellorsville in May 1863. However, his valiant soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia were also suffering heavy casualties. This was a consequence of Lee’s offensive spirit, but it cost his army dearly. While it would be wrong to call Lee a butcher, the Army of Northern Virginia took more than 10,000 casualties at Antietam, 5,300 casualties at Fredericksburg, and more than 13,000 casualties at Chancellorsville – losses it could ill afford.

Lee at Gettysburg

While Lee’s tactical acumen and battlefield

LEE AND GRANT’S KEY BATTLES

As the conflict raged on, the generals traded victories in spectacular style

The generalship of Lee and Grant featured detailed planning as well as an ability to react to unforeseen opportunities on the battlefield. Both were forceful commanders who were unafraid to take heavy casualties to win battles. Grant was often called a ‘butcher’ because of the costly battles that he fought, but unlike many other Union generals, he was never afraid to give battle. Whereas most Federal commanders would fight and then retire some distance to let their soldiers recover, Grant would not retreat, but keep on attacking.

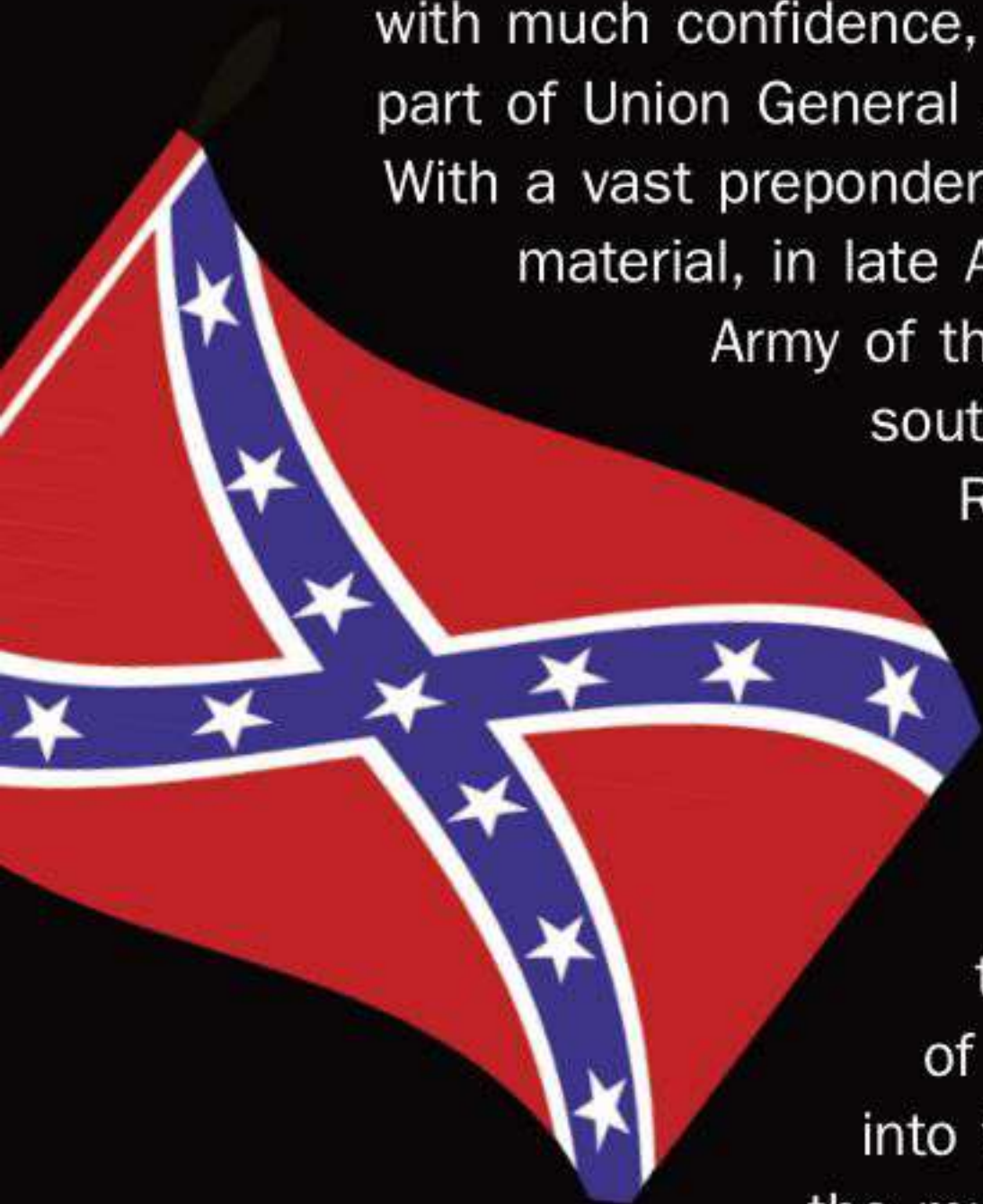
In battle, Grant was always able to remain calm, and this reassured his officers. “The chief characteristic in your nature,” William T Sherman wrote to him, “is the simple faith in success you have always manifested... you go into battle without hesitation... no doubts, no reserve... this made us act with confidence.”

Lee was even more aggressive than Grant, perhaps because with his small army he could not afford to rely upon superior numbers or attrition to win a battle. Also, at least in the early years of the war, Lee had

the advantage of more capable subordinates, especially Stonewall Jackson. This would have meant nothing, however, had Lee been unwilling to listen to them and accept their advice. It was Jackson who came up with the plan to strike a hammer blow against Federal troops at Chancellorsville. Lee let him execute it and the result was devastating to the enemy. But Lee’s offensive instinct could hurt his own army too, since even in victory his battles were always bloody affairs for his troops.

CHANCELLORSVILLE: LEE’S MASTERPIECE

The Chancellorsville campaign had begun with much confidence, at least on the part of Union General Joseph Hooker. With a vast preponderance in men and material, in late April 1863 Hooker’s Army of the Potomac moved south across the Rappahannock River. Hooker did this to force Lee, who was in an entrenched position along the river just south of Fredericksburg, into the open where the much larger Union army of 120,000 would crush Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, which was just half the size.



01 HOOKER DIGS IN

Instead of attacking Lee, Hooker sets his men to digging in around the town of Chancellorsville. General Jeb Stuart’s cavalry brings word to Lee that Hooker’s right-wing entrenchments are utterly exposed. Jackson wants to swing around left and crush them by a flank attack that will shatter the vulnerable Yankee line.

03 JACKSON STRIKES

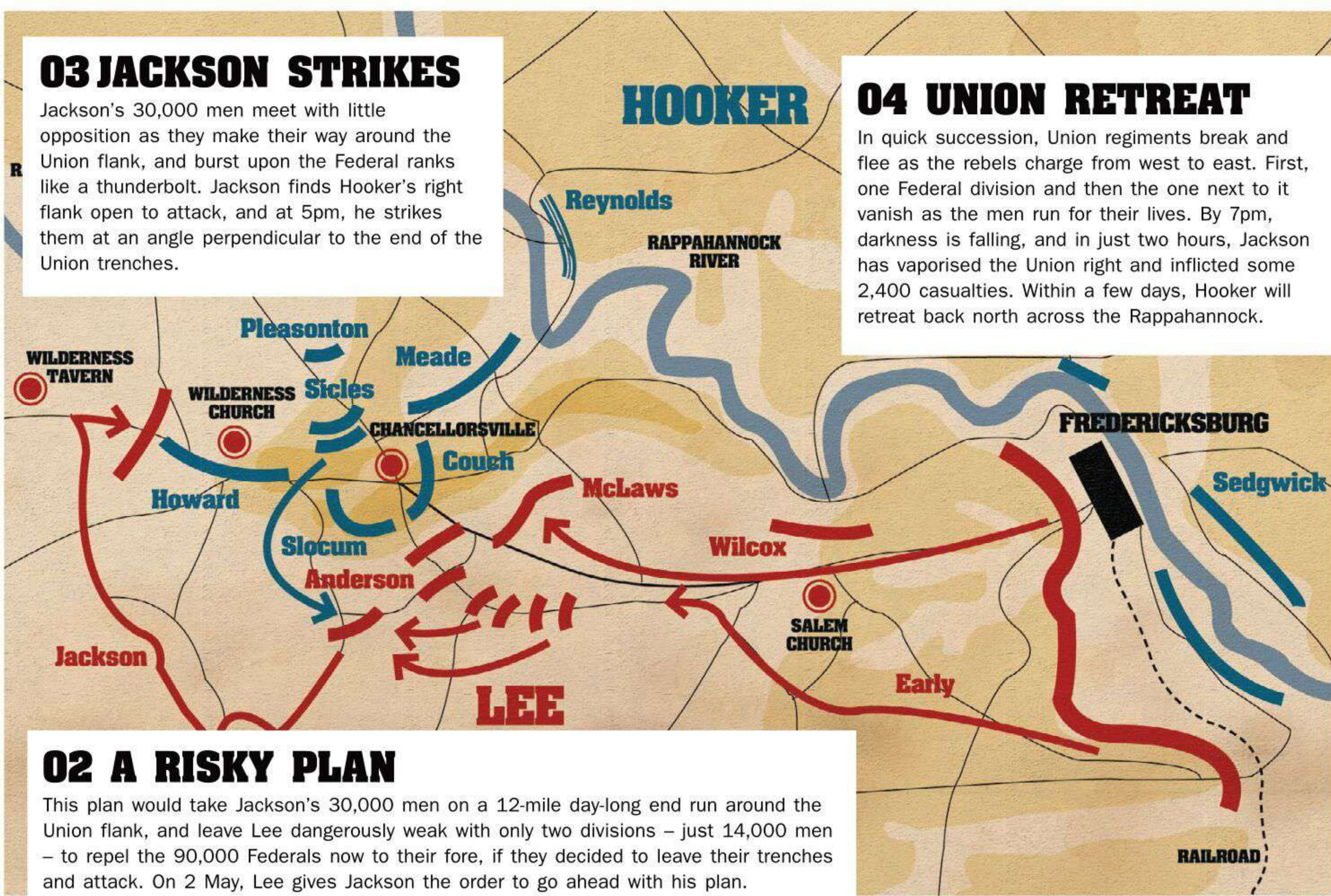
Jackson’s 30,000 men meet with little opposition as they make their way around the Union flank, and burst upon the Federal ranks like a thunderbolt. Jackson finds Hooker’s right flank open to attack, and at 5pm, he strikes them at an angle perpendicular to the end of the Union trenches.

02 A RISKY PLAN

This plan would take Jackson’s 30,000 men on a 12-mile day-long end run around the Union flank, and leave Lee dangerously weak with only two divisions – just 14,000 men – to repel the 90,000 Federals now to their fore, if they decided to leave their trenches and attack. On 2 May, Lee gives Jackson the order to go ahead with his plan.

04 UNION RETREAT

In quick succession, Union regiments break and flee as the rebels charge from west to east. First, one Federal division and then the one next to it vanish as the men run for their lives. By 7pm, darkness is falling, and in just two hours, Jackson has vaporised the Union right and inflicted some 2,400 casualties. Within a few days, Hooker will retreat back north across the Rappahannock.



Grant have been rightly praised, his strategic vision has occasioned a more nuanced view, and even brought him criticism. Lee tended to fight battles in a very aggressive manner, meaning he often incurred severe casualties even when winning. These were losses that could not be made good with the same speed as the more populous North could with its own.

It was Lee's decision to invade Pennsylvania, a Northern state, that led to the Battle of Gettysburg, in which the Army of Northern Virginia took on a much larger and improved Army of the Potomac. His boldness saw him fight a three-day battle from 1-3 July 1863, in which his troops were ground down by Federal soldiers. The action culminated on 3 July with Pickett's Charge, which failed and resulted only in the destruction of Lee's last fresh division, which took some 7,000 casualties.

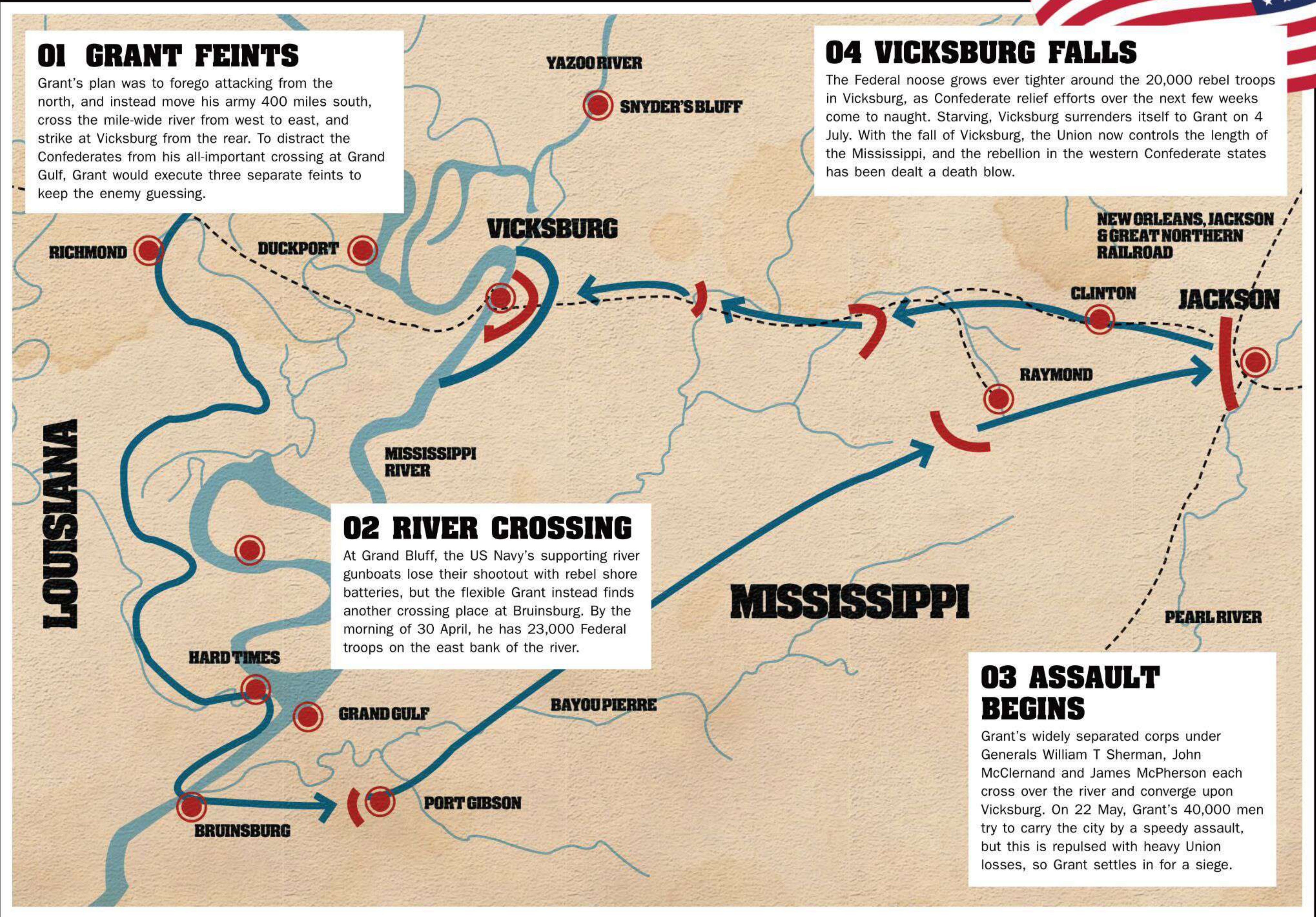
"It is all my fault," Lee said to his exhausted troops after the failure of Pickett's Charge. Lee



In this painting titled 'First at Vicksburg', the Union 1st Battalion, 13th Infantry, can be seen planting its colours on Confederate positions

THE FALL OF VICKSBURG: GRANT ON THE MISSISSIPPI

In the west in early 1863, Grant, commander of the Army of the Tennessee, had been stymied for months in his attempts to take the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi. It was strongly fortified and commanded the river from atop a high bluff above. Grant would have to get to terrain more suited to offensive operations against the city, but these could only be found to the south and east, on the other side of the Mississippi.



LEGENDS OF THE BATTLEFIELD

had lost one third of his army of 75,000, some 28,000 men, in just three days. Union General George G Meade's 90,000-man Army of the Potomac had held better and more defensible terrain from the beginning, and the overly aggressive Lee obliged him by attacking into the teeth of Federal guns. His subordinate officers had urged him not to attack, but Lee would hear none of their caution. "The enemy is there," he said, right before ordering Pickett into the attack on the third day, "and I am going to strike him."

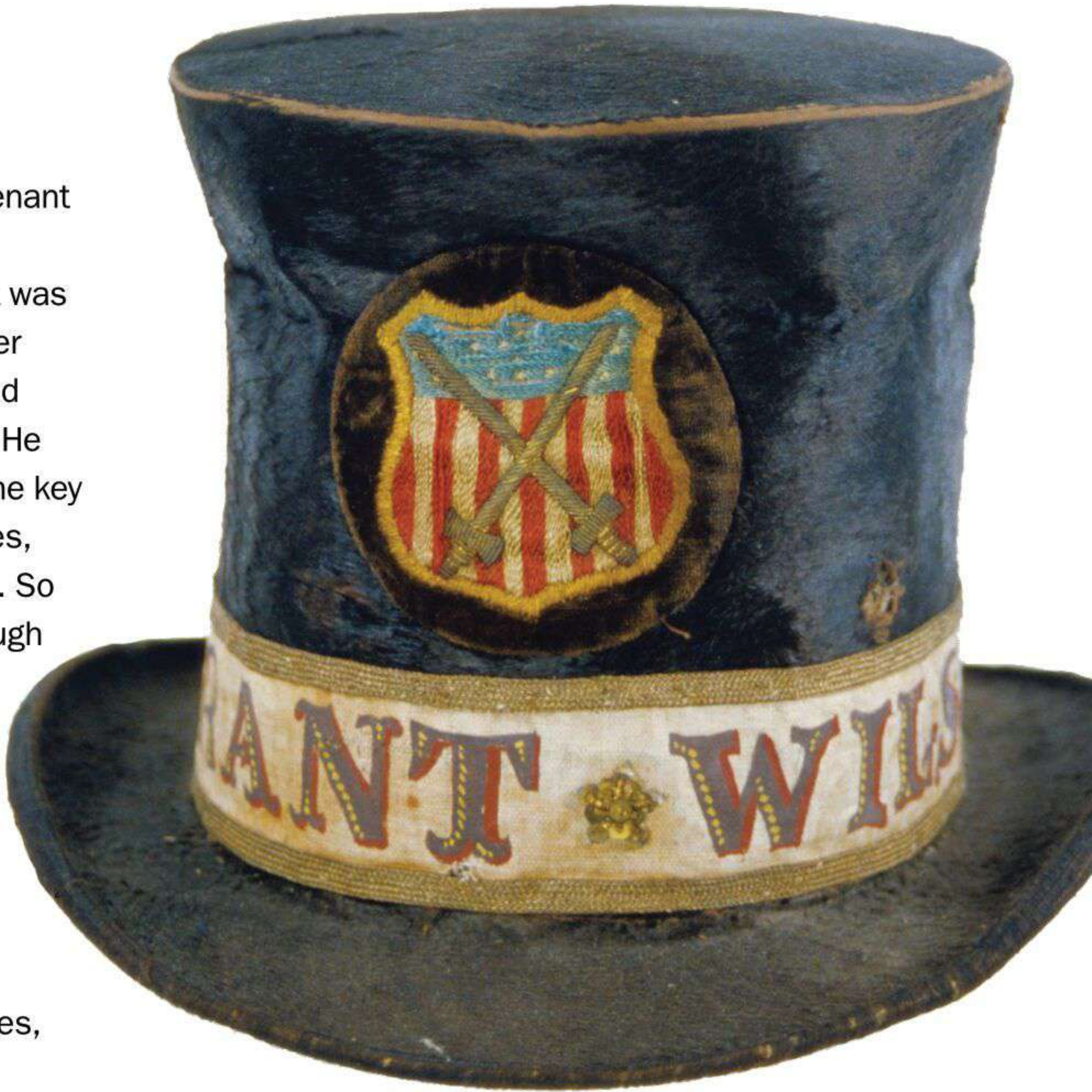
Despite hurling his men at the Federal position, bluecoat losses in the battle were, uncharacteristically, lighter than Lee's, just 25,000. The needless invasion of Pennsylvania had accomplished nothing except the death of thousands of Lee's and Meade's soldiers, and victory for the South was further away than ever. Lee may have missed the assistance of Stonewall Jackson, but had Jackson survived long enough to have taken part at Gettysburg, he was just one man, and he and Lee could not overcome the insuperable advantages held by the North in men and resources.

Grant in command

In Grant, Lincoln had finally found a general he could rely upon to take the fight to the enemy. "I can't spare this man," Lincoln had once said of Grant, "he fights." In March 1864, Grant was

promoted to the resuscitated rank of lieutenant general and made commander of all Union armies, comprising some 550,000 men. It was now his mission to take all of the manpower and material advantages that the North had and use them to destroy the Confederacy. He was unafraid to give battle, knowing that the key to victory was defeating Confederate armies, whose losses could not be easily replaced. So he would make the rebels bleed, even though it cost his own troops terribly too. The Federal armies under Grant's command took stunningly heavy casualties in the Wilderness, at Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna and Cold Harbor in May-June 1864, but so did the Army of Northern Virginia. The defeat of the Confederacy required the death of its armies, which were still skilled and potent.

Grant's willingness to fight helped him past what might have sunk his hopes of retaining his command early in the war. He had a drinking problem of uncertain severity, with much depending upon the observer. Sherman was well aware of Grant's penchant for alcohol, as were many others, but believed that it did not hinder Grant. Though Grant "would occasionally drink too much," Sherman wrote, "when anything was pending, he was invariably abstinent of drink." President Lincoln is said to have wished to send



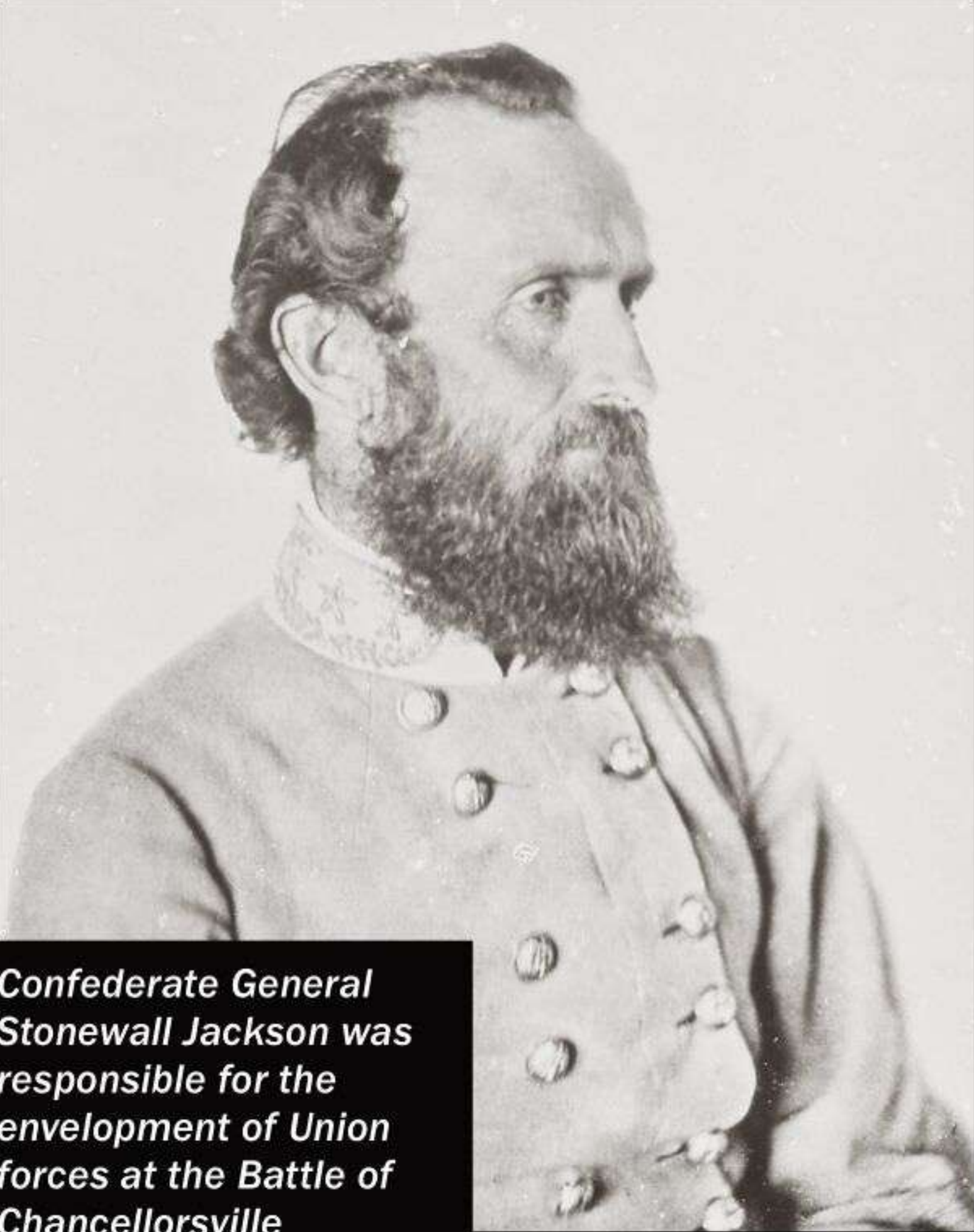
a barrel of the same whiskey imbibed by Grant to his other generals to get them to fight as hard.

The beginning of the end of the rebellion

In June 1864, Petersburg, Virginia – a vital rail junction through which the bulk of the Confederacy's capital of Richmond's supplies moved – was besieged by Grant. If the city was to be captured, Lee would have to either fight

TRUSTED LIEUTENANTS
The men who made their leaders great

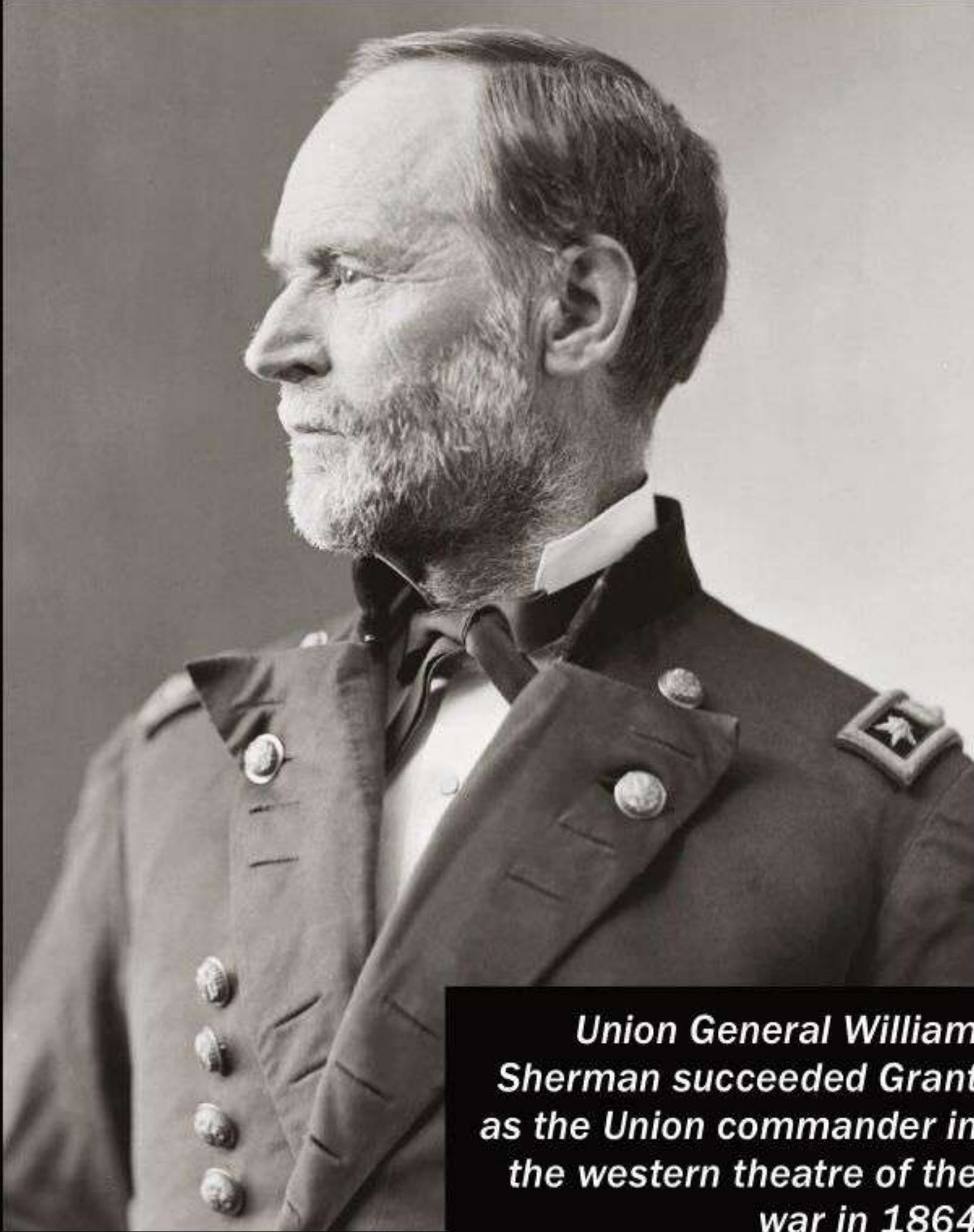
Both Grant and Lee would have the benefit in wartime of extremely able subordinates. For Grant, this was William Tecumseh Sherman, a fellow classmate at West Point military academy. Like Grant, Sherman had resigned from army service to pursue a civilian career, in banking, with mixed results. The ill-tempered Sherman's early civil war career was less than splendid. He was aghast at



Confederate General Stonewall Jackson was responsible for the envelopment of Union forces at the Battle of Chancellorsville

the problems he encountered with inept, ill-trained volunteers and overly inquisitive reporters. The press made him appear to be mentally deranged, and he was relieved of command. He later found himself back in the war leading a division under the overall command of Grant at Shiloh in April 1862. Grant and Sherman would thereafter form a partnership of war and take Vicksburg on the Mississippi the next year. The bond between Sherman and Grant was unshakable. Forged in the trying times in the beginning of the war that both men experienced, they were the closest of comrades. "He stood by me when I was crazy," Sherman would say in jest, "and I stood by him when he was drunk; and now, sir, we stand by each other always." Lee was blessed with the aid of Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson, a general whose military acumen was unsurpassed on either side of the war. Like Lee, Jackson was a Virginian, born in Clarksburg in 1824. His parents died while he was still young, and he was raised by an uncle. The military life appealed to him, and he was admitted to West Point's class of 1846. He saw service during the Mexican-American War as an artillery officer and his performance was so exemplary that he was rapidly promoted from brevet lieutenant to brevet major. In 1851, he resigned from the army and took a teaching position at the Virginia Military Institute, where he taught philosophy, optics and artillery tactics. He was still teaching there when war came.

Jackson was personally opposed to secession, and though he owned six slaves, was not pro-slavery in any meaningful sense. Nevertheless, he followed his home state of Virginia out of the Union and into war, when it came. Jackson and the First Virginia Brigade he commanded at First Bull Run in July 1861 both earned the moniker 'Stonewall' for their stalwart defence against a furious Federal assault.



Union General William Sherman succeeded Grant as the Union commander in the western theatre of the war in 1864

Grant in open country or allow Richmond to fall to Union forces. The Army of the Potomac tried and failed to take Petersburg by storm, and then settled down into a formal siege with trenches dug all around it. Though the bloody siege would last for months, Grant had effectively pinned Lee down, and through constant attrition, the small Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was whittled away.

Meanwhile, in the west, Sherman was hard at work driving the rebel army of General Joseph Johnston out of Tennessee and into Georgia, where he took Atlanta. The 62,000-strong Army of the Tennessee then began its great march through Georgia and the Carolinas in the middle of November 1864. Rebel armies could always retreat away from him, and destroying them was next to impossible, so Sherman had to destroy the South's ability, and even willingness, to make war. Having already taken Atlanta, he forgot about his supply lines and started out into untouched Georgia countryside, where his men would live off the land. Along a broad swathe of territory 60 miles wide, bluecoats burned farms and crops, ripped up railway tracks, and caused all sorts of havoc among an outraged but impotent Southern public. Lee, still beset by Grant at Petersburg, could do nothing to help.

After a movement of some 250 miles, Sherman's men arrived at Savannah, on the Atlantic coast, on 21 December. Georgia was a ruin, and out of the war. From Savannah, Sherman's men continued on through the Carolinas, burning as they marched. This was 'total war'. The South could not withstand much more of the same.

Back at Petersburg, the siege ground on, consuming more and more men like coals in a furnace. By early April 1865, Lee's position in the city was untenable, and on 1 April, he withdrew his troops, and warned the Confederate government in Richmond that he could no longer protect the capital. On 2 April, Grant mounted an attack on the weakened rebel defence works, and his 60,000 men rolled over the mere 20,000 left behind by Lee. Petersburg fell that same day, and Richmond was in Grant's hands by the next. The matter of most importance to Grant now was defeating Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, which was in the open and vulnerable. Lee understood better than anyone else just how badly his ill-fed and poorly clad men had suffered, and that his army was surrounded by Union troops. The end of the Army of Northern Virginia was at hand.

Appomattox Court House

On 9 April 1865, after an exchange of messages, Grant and Lee met at the McLean house in Appomattox Court House to formalise the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. In a grand irony, Major Wilmer McLean's farm in

THE BALANCE OF POWER, NORTH AND SOUTH

The genius of generals alone wasn't enough for victory

The North had tremendous latent advantages over the South. It had far more people, and thus could both put more soldiers into the field and replace losses more easily. The Union also possessed three times as much railway track as the South. Its industrial development far surpassed that of the South, which had retained a largely agrarian economy. The North could make most of its own muskets and cannons, for example, and could buy arms from Europe to make up any shortfall. The US Navy's naval blockade of Southern ports would choke off almost all Confederate imports except for a handful of blockade runners of negligible significance.

Diplomatically, the support and recognition that the Southern states expected from Europe, especially Britain, never materialised. This was mainly because of the Southern over-estimation of the importance of cotton. Many Southerners had thought that when the supply of cotton from the South was disrupted by war, the shortage would cause the British to bring about a negotiated settlement that resulted in the recognition of the Confederacy's independence. Instead, British importers found other sources for cotton, and the South was left without allies or significant diplomatic support.



The tactically inconclusive Battle of Spotsylvania Court House saw 32,000 Union and Confederate casualties

Manassas had been fought over at the war's beginning back in April 1861 during the First Battle of Bull Run. The major had taken his family to Appomattox, where he thought they could avoid the rest of the war. Now, in April 1865, it was ending in his home.

Arriving first, Lee, perfectly attired, as was his custom, rode up on his horse, Traveller, to the McLean house where he would meet Grant. Arriving afterwards, Grant, by contrast, was dressed very simply, and was not even wearing a sword. Sat in the parlour, they talked a bit about their experiences in Mexico, decades

before, and then at Lee's prompting, got down to business.

Grant's terms were that Lee's surrendered officers and men should be released on parole, never to fight again until exchanged (which would never happen as the war was over) and that the rebels' weapons would be turned over to Federal forces. Lee agreed, and their terms were put in writing. As Lee departed, Grant and the other Union officers present raised their hats in salute. Lee did likewise, and rode back to his army. Lee's war was over, and soon the civil war would be at an end too.

Men collect the dead after the Battle of Gettysburg





A portrait of Pershing

JOHN J PERSHING

Disciplinarian ‘Black Jack’ Pershing commanded American forces during World War I



For John Joseph Pershing, 1915 proved a year marked by tragedy. On the night of 26-27 August, a fire broke out at Pershing’s home in San Francisco. He was at the time a brigadier general and had settled in the Californian city in 1914 when taking command of the 8th Brigade following service in the Philippines. Trouble along the Mexican border had seen Pershing and his Brigade ordered to El Paso. His wife and young family – three girls and a boy – had stayed in San Francisco, where Pershing presumed they would be safe. The fire, however, was devastating. His wife and his three daughters all suffocated amid the blaze. Only his son, Warren, survived. Pershing was utterly crushed.

The following year, Pershing was promoted to major general, but he found no solace in the appointment. “All the promotion in the world,” he told a friend, “would make no difference now.” And yet Pershing did his duty, throwing himself into his military endeavours. The year 1916 saw the Mexican warlord Francisco ‘Pancho’ Villa, frustrated by American support for his rival Venustiano Carranza, launch an attack on US territory, raiding the town of

Columbus, New Mexico. With 18 Americans killed in the raid, the government ordered a Punitive Expedition and Pershing was elected to the command.

By the time the Punitive Expedition withdrew from Mexico in early 1917, it had succeeded in reducing Villa’s forces, earning Pershing the command of the US-Mexico border. This was Pershing’s position in April 1917 when President Woodrow Wilson finally decided that America should enter the war in Europe. Contrary to Wilson’s hopes, it had become apparent that the US could not push for a liberal world order while remaining detached from such a major conflict. The president had also discovered that Germany was willing to back Mexico, and Pancho Villa in particular, if America entered the war on the Allies’ side.

Hence, on 2 April 1917 Wilson addressed the American people, telling them, “We shall fight for the things which we have always carried closest to our hearts.” His intentions were noble, as were those of Britain and France in 1914, but while the great European powers had bought into those ideals with the spending of millions of lives, America had at this moment very little to offer militarily on a practical

level. The American standing army mustered only around 100,000 men and one-third of those were in the cavalry or coastal artillery. Pershing’s campaign against Pancho Villa had marked the very limits of their capabilities.

Wilson, therefore, looked to conscription as the only viable option, though this had obvious, negative repercussions for those hoping for the rapid deployment of an American Expeditionary Force (AEF). First, the existing troops would be required to train the new recruits, acting as a cadre and adopting them into their units. Secondly, American arms production, which had been a vital cog in the Allies’ war machine, would now need to turn inward and forge weapons and munitions for its own troops. The commander-in-chief of the German war effort, Erich Ludendorff, figured that America would not be able to launch an armed assault in Europe until 1919.

Still, America pressed ahead and Wilson had six major generals, the highest-ranking officers, at his disposal, though all but Leonard Wood and Pershing were either too ill or too old. The decision as to who would command the AEF fell in Pershing’s favour. Here was a man, unlike Wood, who had proven himself physically fit

**‘BLACK JACK’
AND THE BUFFALO
SOLDIERS**

Pershing earned his nickname following his service with the African-American troops of the 10th Cavalry

Pershing was transferred to the 10th Cavalry, a crack troop of African-American soldiers, in 1895 as a 35-year-old first lieutenant. He joined as the regiment was tasked with rounding up sections of the Cree population and deporting them to Canada. After arriving at Fort Assiniboine in October 1895, he was given command of the 10th Cavalry’s Troop H, which had the awkward assignment of running down bands of Crees who had turned fugitive and were hightailing it across the plains toward Idaho and North Dakota. He commanded the troop with gusto, however, and treated his men with courtesy and respect.

His commitment to the 10th found full voice when they were assigned to active duties in Cuba following the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898 and he lobbied incessantly to be allowed to fight with them in the campaign, even though the War Department had stated that no member of the Military Academy’s faculty should be allowed to serve in the field. Yet Pershing got his way and his men served with distinction, especially during the feted charge up San Juan Hill where, upon their victory, the 10th planted their regimental flag. Such was the 10th’s bravery, Pershing and his fellow officers argued for black troops to be granted commissions, a move that came to full fruition when the army was expanded during WWI.

When Pershing led the punitive expedition across the Mexican border in pursuit of Pancho Villa, he took the 10th Cavalry with him and later he wrote glowingly of “my service with a coloured regiment and how proud we were of its conduct in the Spanish-American War”. ‘Black Jack’ Pershing was a name he carried with pride.



The 10th cavalry, an African-American unit, served in with Pershing in Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898

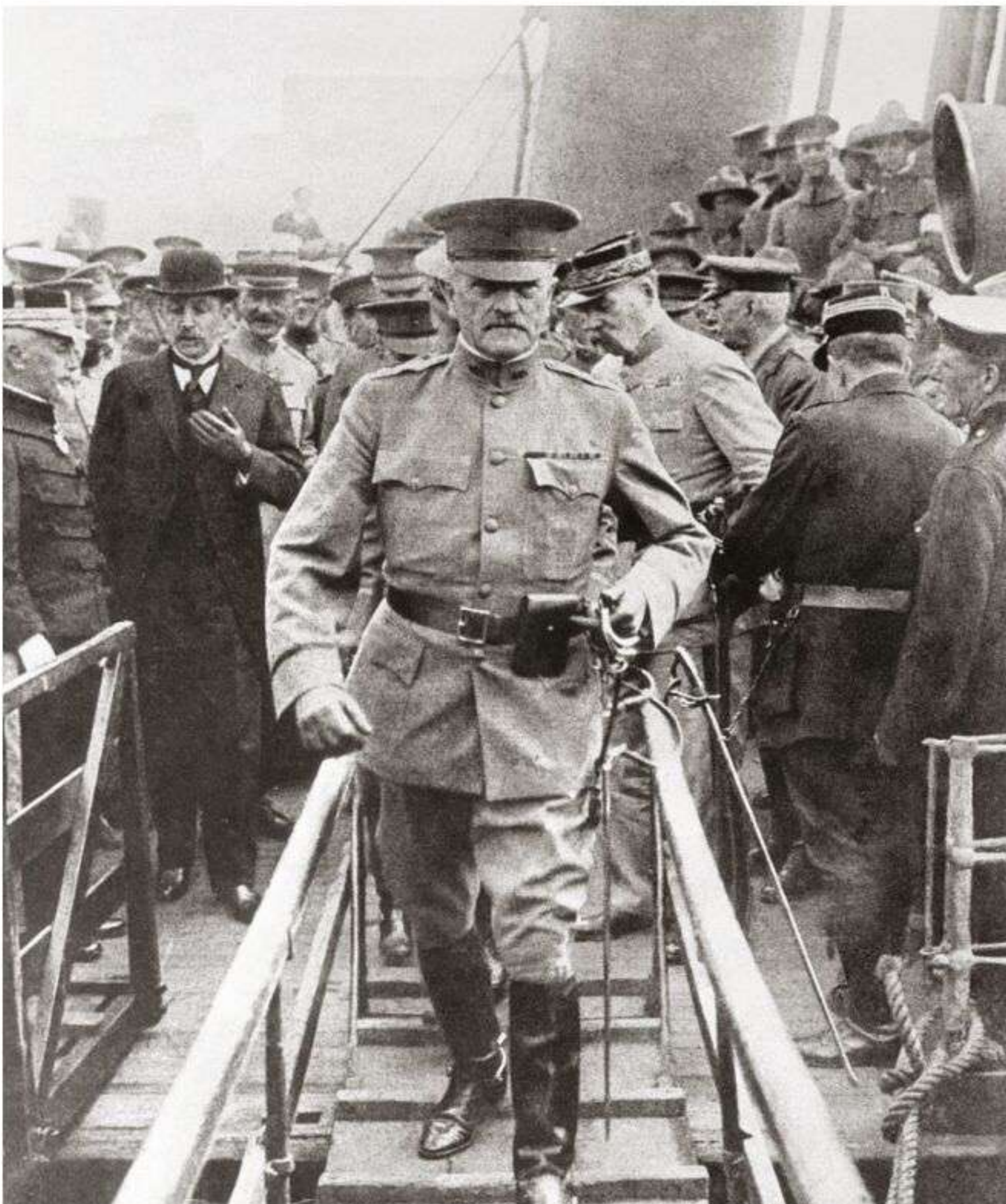


Pershing inspects two ranks of the 2nd Battalion, an African American battalion in World War I. Known as ‘Black Jack’, Pershing always held these troops in high regard

and able to lead troops in the field. Pershing had shown himself to be a man of action with a wide range of military skills, though just how suited they would be to the manpower-sapping war of attrition that raged in Europe remained to be seen.

Upon his appointment, Pershing was 57 years old. He had been born in 1860 on a farm near Laclede, Missouri, his father having supported the Union army as a sutler during the Civil War. He entered the military academy at West Point in 1882, though he claimed that at the time he was more interested in the education on offer than any future military career. He emerged as a middling student, ranking 30th among his 77 peers though he demonstrated a penchant for leadership and was chosen first captain of cadets and president of his class. He graduated in the summer of 1886 and, after considering a petition to the army to allow him to delay active service while he studied for a law degree, in September of the same year he joined the 6th US Cavalry, commissioned as a second lieutenant, and was stationed at Fort Bayard in New Mexico. The 6th US Cavalry was conducting operations against Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apache and Pershing was later cited for bravery during these campaigns.

His early career as a cavalryman saw him operate from various posts along the frontier, in both New Mexico and South Dakota, and he played a role in the suppression of the final



General Pershing, the American Commander in Europe during WWI, arrives in France with the first American soldiers

uprisings of the Sioux. In 1890 Pershing served in the campaign to put down the Ghost Dance movement, an uprising among the Sioux in the Dakota Territory, and while his unit did not participate in the massacre at Wounded Knee, it did fight in its aftermath, in January 1891, when Sioux warriors attacked the 6th Cavalry’s supply train.

As the year drew to a close he began a four-year stay at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, becoming an instructor in military science while also earning the law degree after which he had hankered. He enjoyed such success with the university’s drill team that the students voted to change their name to the Pershing Rifles, widely cited as the first of a whole host of such

“IN 1890 PERSHING SERVED IN THE CAMPAIGN TO PUT DOWN THE GHOST DANCE MOVEMENT, AN UPRISING AMONG THE SIOUX”

companies that operate today. After leaving Lincoln, Pershing returned to frontier service, where he was promoted to first lieutenant of the 10th Cavalry before entering West Point for a one-year stint as tactical officer in 1897.

It was here that he earned the nickname 'Black Jack', a derisory moniker foisted upon him by his cadets who objected to what they viewed as his excessive discipline. The name came from his having commanded black troops during his frontier campaigns, most notably with the 10th Cavalry. The name stuck, most likely with reference to a stern demeanour in the face of ill discipline.

After his year at West Point he returned to active service with the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, which erupted following the sinking of the warship USS Maine in Havana harbour, Cuba, in the February of that year. America supported the Cuban Revolt against the island's Spanish overlords and Pershing served with distinction through the Santiago campaign, which saw the American Army, including Pershing's 10th Cavalry, invade in a bid to capture Cuba's second-largest city.

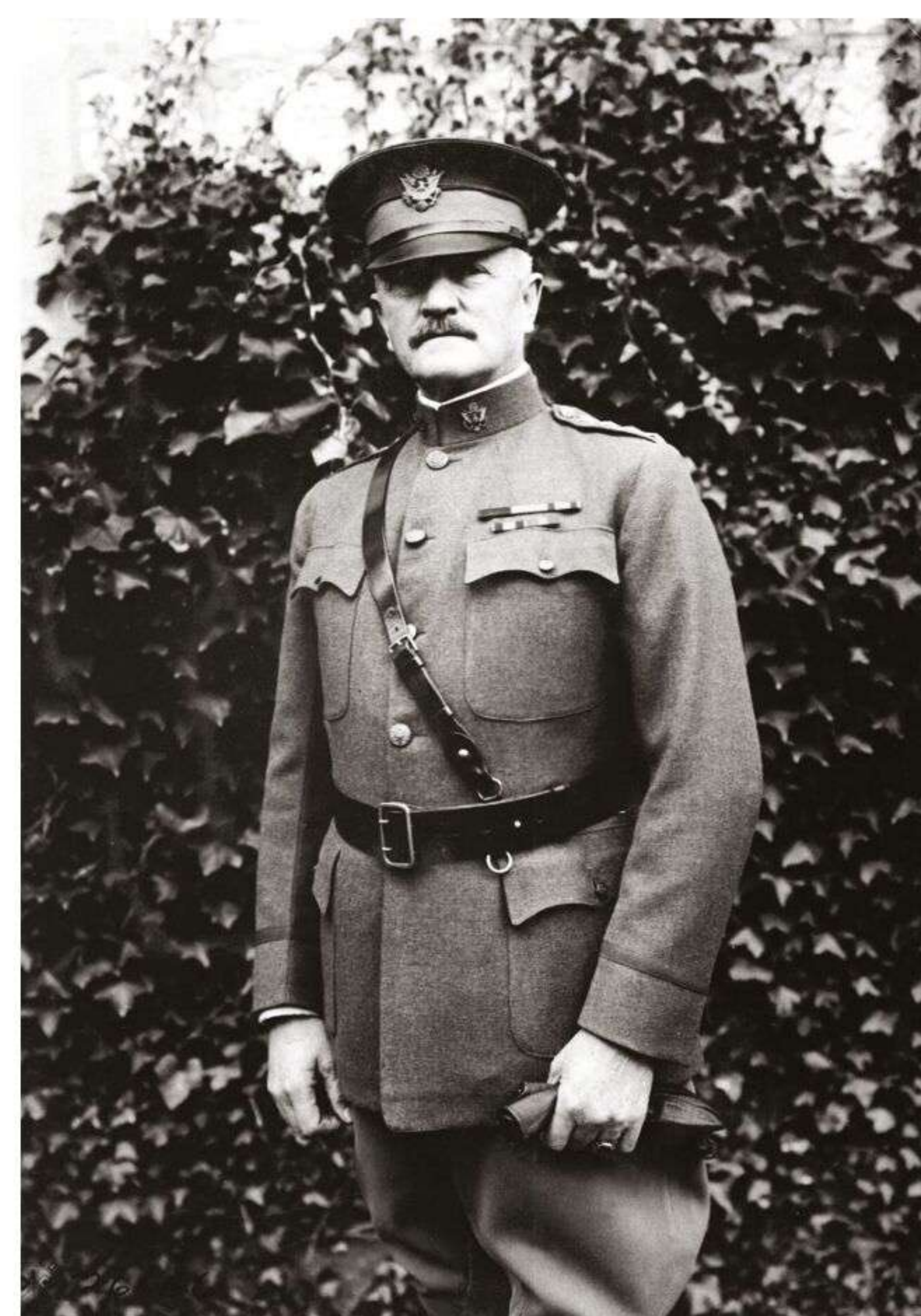
The war witnessed Pershing's quick promotion, taking the role of ordnance officer with the rank of major of volunteers. In June 1899 he was made adjutant general, before overseeing the Bureau of Insular Affairs in the War Department. Under fire he was said by one observer to be 'as cool as a bowl of cracked ice'. As the war spread through the Pacific, Pershing was dispatched to the Philippines and the southern island of Mindanao in November 1899 as a young lieutenant. He was appointed captain in 1901 and conducted a campaign against the Moros, a fierce Muslim people who had fought ardently against Spanish rule and who now resisted the Americans.

While serving in the Philippines, Pershing set out to forge better relations with the Moros of the Maranao tribes. He successfully established friendly relations, a move that paid dividends with the captain being recognised

as an honorary local chieftain. He returned to the US in 1903 and there he met, courted and married Helen Frances Warren, daughter of the Wyoming senator Francis E Warren.

His honeymoon in 1905 was spent in Japan where he had been posted as military attaché to the American embassy, and during the Russo-Japanese War he spent several months as an observer with the Japanese army in Manchuria. In 1906, he received the biggest boost of his career to date, jumping from captain to brigadier general, pushing past 862 more senior officers. His father-in-law was chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee at the time, prompting cries of nepotism. In truth, all but one of the generals in the US Army had recommended Pershing's promotion, though Senator Warren most likely proved a valuable ally in getting the position confirmed through the Senate. Soon after Pershing returned to the Philippines and served as commander of the department of Mindanao and governor of Moro Province from 1909-1913.

During the American conflict with the Moros, police and soldiers were often assailed by juramentado, suicide swordsman on a personal jihad whose assault and ensuing martyrdom would ensure their place in heaven. In his memoirs, Pershing recorded that his men responded by burying each dead swordsman with a pig, an unclean animal, which would hamper the jihadist's passing into the gilded regions of the next life. Though some have questioned whether Pershing was ever involved in such actions, it was, he insisted in his memoirs, an unpleasant but effective antidote. He returned to America, to command the 8th Brigade and was posted to El Paso, his last major command before his appointment as commander of the American troops in Europe.



With a staff of 191 men and officers, Pershing set sail for Europe in May 1917, landing in France on 9 June 1917 and after organising his General Staff he wrote to the War Department recommending that it dispatch a force of "at least one million men by next May," and a force of three million by 1919. It was vital, said Pershing, that America retained the integrity of her own forces. Upon US entry in the war, the Allies had pushed for the dispersal of American troops into existing Allied lines to bolster their depleted numbers.

Pershing's vision won through and on 21 October, American soldiers entered front-line trenches for the very first time at a quiet area near Nancy. Each regiment of the 1st Division sent a battalion for a ten-day tour with a French division. During the night of 2-3 November the



Captain Pershing in command during the advance on Fort Bacolod, Lanao District in the Philippines during the islands' fight for independence



Pershing in Mexico leading the Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa following the bandit's attack on US soil



Pershing saluting on horseback while leading World War I veterans on parade in New York City. By 1919 he was appointed General of the Armies



Pershing with Pancho Villa. The latter would soon become an elusive enemy

AEF became involved in its first skirmish with a handful of lives lost. The AEF had, at this stage, four divisions stationed in France – the 1st, 2nd, 26th and 42nd – and though Pershing had requested one million men by May of the following year, he was told that the number would barely top half of that. The US also lacked the resources to supply them. Pershing remained undaunted.

By December 1917, the Allies were in difficulty. The Central Powers had signed an armistice with Russia, thus freeing up troops from their eastern front, while the British had suffered huge losses at both Ypres and Passchendaele and the French had not only endured failure at Nivelle but had also suffered mutinies during the spring. American reinforcements were urgently required, yet only 175,000 men had arrived in France and many were under-trained. In contrast, a far less well-resourced country like Canada had a full division in line within six months of its entry into the war, while during the Gallipoli campaign the ANZACs had placed two divisions in line in just two months. The French mockingly referred to the American forces as boy scouts. When an American accidentally ran over a Parisian with his car, the French claimed that the AEF was killing more Frenchmen than Germans.



Pershing, General of the Armies of the United States, speaks with Secretary of War Winston Churchill

“THE CENTRAL POWERS HAD SIGNED AN ARMISTICE WITH RUSSIA, THUS FREEING UP TROOPS FROM THEIR EASTERN FRONT”

Pershing was frustrated. By February 1918, America had been at war for ten months and yet only the 1st Division held a front, and that was one of the quietest. Pershing believed that when the mighty German Spring Offensive broke, the Americans would have to “stand by almost helpless” as they watched the Allies crumble. He feared the Allies would be hit by “the mightiest military offensive that the world had ever known,” and in the March of that year, Germany did indeed unleash a torrent of fire. On 21 March, the Germans rained down their heaviest artillery bombardment of the war,

thus far dispatching 71 divisions against the 26 British divisions holding the critical juncture of the Western Front, desperate to break the Allies before the American war machine finally lumbered into effective action. By 5 April, the British had suffered close to 170,000 casualties in just two weeks.

With the Allies stretched, Pershing offered to put all four of his divisions into the line, suggesting they form one corps, though the French commander-in-chief, Philippe Petain, disagreed, pointing out the Germans would most likely focus their attention on such a

battle-raw section of the line. Pershing, ever practical, acquiesced, and though it was not the move that he wanted, he placed all his resources at the disposal of French Marshal, Ferdinand Foch, who the allied powers promoted to the position of Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies.

The Allies survived the German spring offensive and during the summer launched their own counter moves. This allowed for the formation of an Allied reserve and American troops could at last, as Pershing had long hoped, form their own army in France rather than moving piecemeal to bolster weakened sections of the Allied lines. The American troops had already earned a morale boost courtesy of their action in June at Belleau Wood, when the 2nd Division deployed in the face of a French retreat from the Reims-Soissons front. The Americans fought valiantly and though they won nothing more than a densely packed wood and two small villages, the victory provided a psychological fillip.

Elsewhere, the 1st Division had prospered at Cantigny and the 3rd at Chateau-Thierry. Maybe Pershing’s men could withstand the Germans? He resolved to withdraw his men from Allied tutelage with the AEF standing at around 800,000 men. By August, the AEF had dispensed with all its French instructors. In the same month, with Pershing confident in his numbers and in his men’s resilience, the American First Army was formed.

For all Pershing’s hopes, his army never became entirely self-sufficient, though it soon scored two larger victories and the repercussions of the second offensive reverberated around the world. First came the assault on the Saint-Mihiel salient. This was a huge triangle that cut into the Allied lines, slicing through the Paris-Nancy railway, and

THE HUNT FOR PANCHO VILLA

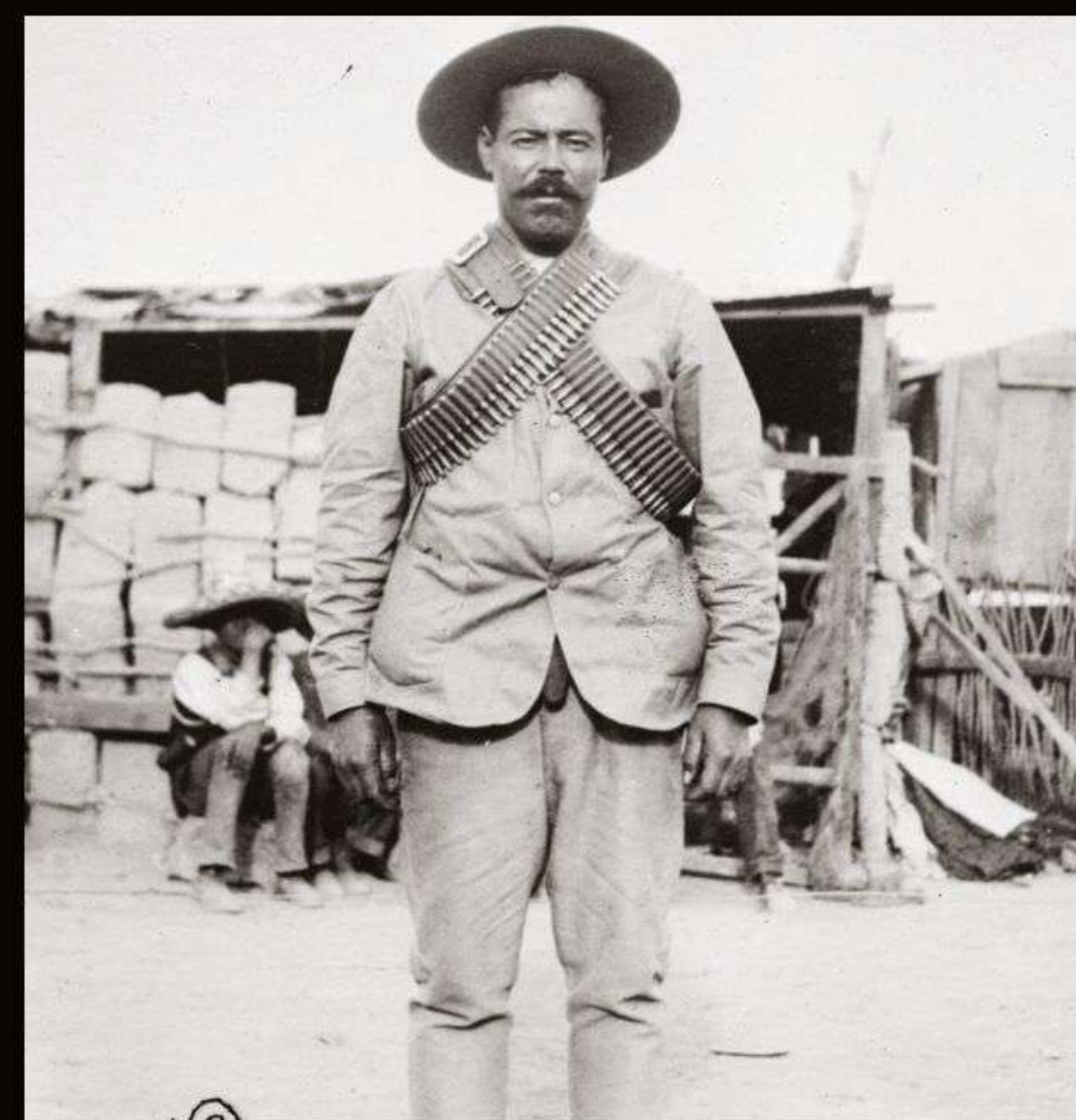
The Mexico campaign against Pancho Villa saw Pershing emerge as front-runner for command of the American forces in Europe

In October 1915, the US government officially recognised Venustiano Carranza as head of the government of Mexico, a move that greatly irked his rival Francisco ‘Pancho’ Villa. When the US facilitated the movement of more than 5,000 Mexican troops who won a victory over Villa at the Battle of Agua Prieta, Villa began to launch attacks against American citizens living in Northern Mexico. Emboldened – and perhaps encouraged by the German government that backed him – Villa then attacked the town of Columbus, in New Mexico, on 9 March 1916, killing ten American civilians and eight soldiers.

President Woodrow Wilson was furious and ordered a Punitive Expedition to enter Mexico and bring Villa to his knees. Pershing, a Brigadier General and the commander of Fort Bliss, Texas,

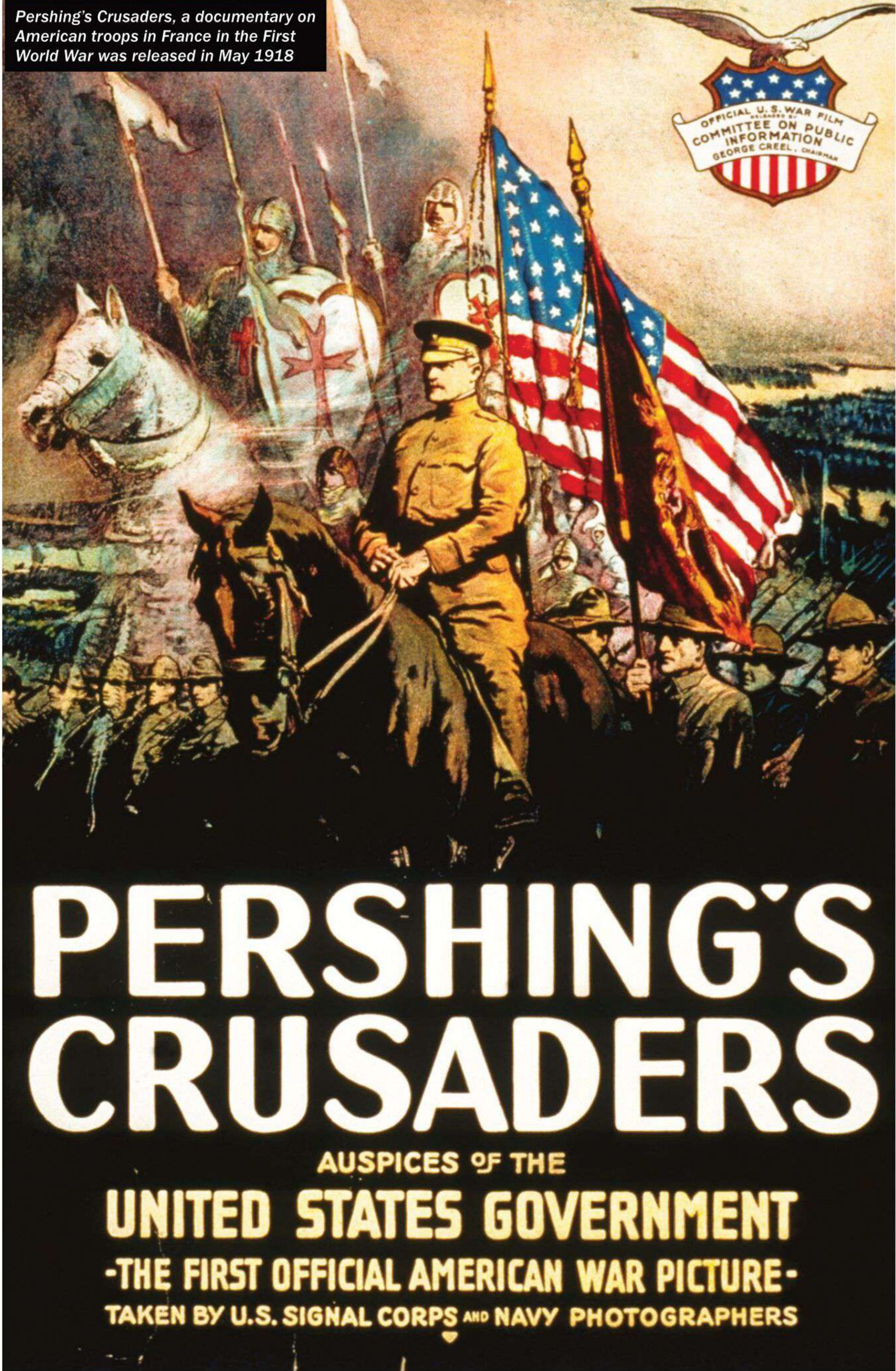
would lead the operation. One of his aides was George S Patton.

By 8 April, General Pershing had advanced more than 400 miles into Mexico with 6,675 men in the largest operation on foreign soil that the American Army had yet attempted. As the expedition progressed, tension between Mexico and America worsened, however, and US troops were soon fighting government men as well as Villa’s. The bandit chief, meanwhile, eluded them. When Pershing withdrew in early February 1917, the American’s had failed in their primary objectives. Yet Pershing had enhanced his reputation as an organiser and leader, and soon found himself centre stage for the most important mission the American army had ever faced, deployment in Europe during WWI.



Pancho Villa launched the first foreign attack on American soil since the American War of Independence

Pershing's Crusaders, a documentary on American troops in France in the First World War was released in May 1918



Pershing had long had his eyes on an American assault, speaking to Petain about an attack during their first meeting in the previous year. The Allies were concerned about American naiveté in the face of a major battle and the British sought to cancel the attack. Foch, however, refused, though he too expressed concern about the Americans' inexperience.

The Saint-Mihiel salient was roughly 25 miles wide and 16 miles deep with a formidable set of defensive works, and the Allies and the Americans committed around two-thirds of a million men, 550,000 Americans and 110,000 French. Most of the ordinance was French. At 1am on 12 September, the American-led assault began and it began well. Pershing had wisely sent the more experienced 1st, 2nd and 42nd Divisions into the more dangerous open spaces to the south, and letting the less experienced divisions move through the sheltered woodland. George S Patton, later to become a titan of American military history, commanded French-made Renault tanks. The operation proved a great success, reducing the salient, reclaiming 200 square miles of territory, and freeing the Paris-Nancy railway. It saw the American First Army, its men and its officers, finally gain their spurs. The stage was now set for Pershing to make real headway.

That contribution came with the Meuse-Argonne Offensive launched on 26 September. The Meuse-Argonne sector was considered one of the most strategically important areas on the whole Western Front and it was a triumph for Pershing that the First Army was chosen to attack Sedan. If successful, this would cut the German railroad network and fatally constrict their position in the occupied territories. The First Army attacked west of the Meuse River, with the dense Argonne Forest hampering their progress. More than a million American troops took part and though suffering heavy casualties they had by the 11th day of the offensive outflanked the enemy, forcing them to retreat.

By 31 October the American forces had advanced ten miles, the French 20 miles, and the Argonne had been cleared of German

TIMELINE

● **John J Pershing is born**
Born on a farm near Laclede, Missouri, to businessman John Fletcher Pershing and homemaker Ann Elizabeth Thompson. He graduates from State Normal School (now Truman State University) in 1880 with a BSc in scientific didactics.
September 1860

● **Joins the 6th Cavalry**
After graduating from West Point in the summer of 1886, Pershing joins Troop L of the 10th Cavalry, reporting for active duty in the September. He serves in California, Arizona, and North Dakota.
July 1886

● **Ghost Dance Campaign**
The 6th cavalry are involved in the suppression of the Sioux uprisings of the Ghost Dance movement though Pershing's unit does not participate in the massacre at Wounded Knee.
December 1890

● **Promoted to first lieutenant**
Joins the 10th Cavalry, a unit with which he would fight with distinction in several theatres of war. His command of these crack African-American soldiers earns him the moniker 'Black Jack'.
October 1892

● **Battle of San Juan Hill**
Fights with the 10th Cavalry during this key offensive in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, fighting alongside the famed Rough Riders and their commander, future president Theodore Roosevelt.
July 1898

● **Marriage to Helen Frances Warren**
He marries Helen Frances Warren, daughter of the Wyoming senator Francis E Warren and honeymoon in Japan, where he is posted on military service.
January 1905

troops. On 10 November the Allies finally reached Sedan and cut the rail line. This was a momentous achievement and Germany sued for peace. The Armistice was declared on 11 November and Pershing had his great victory. America had proved her value in the war for Europe. 'Black Jack' was a hero.

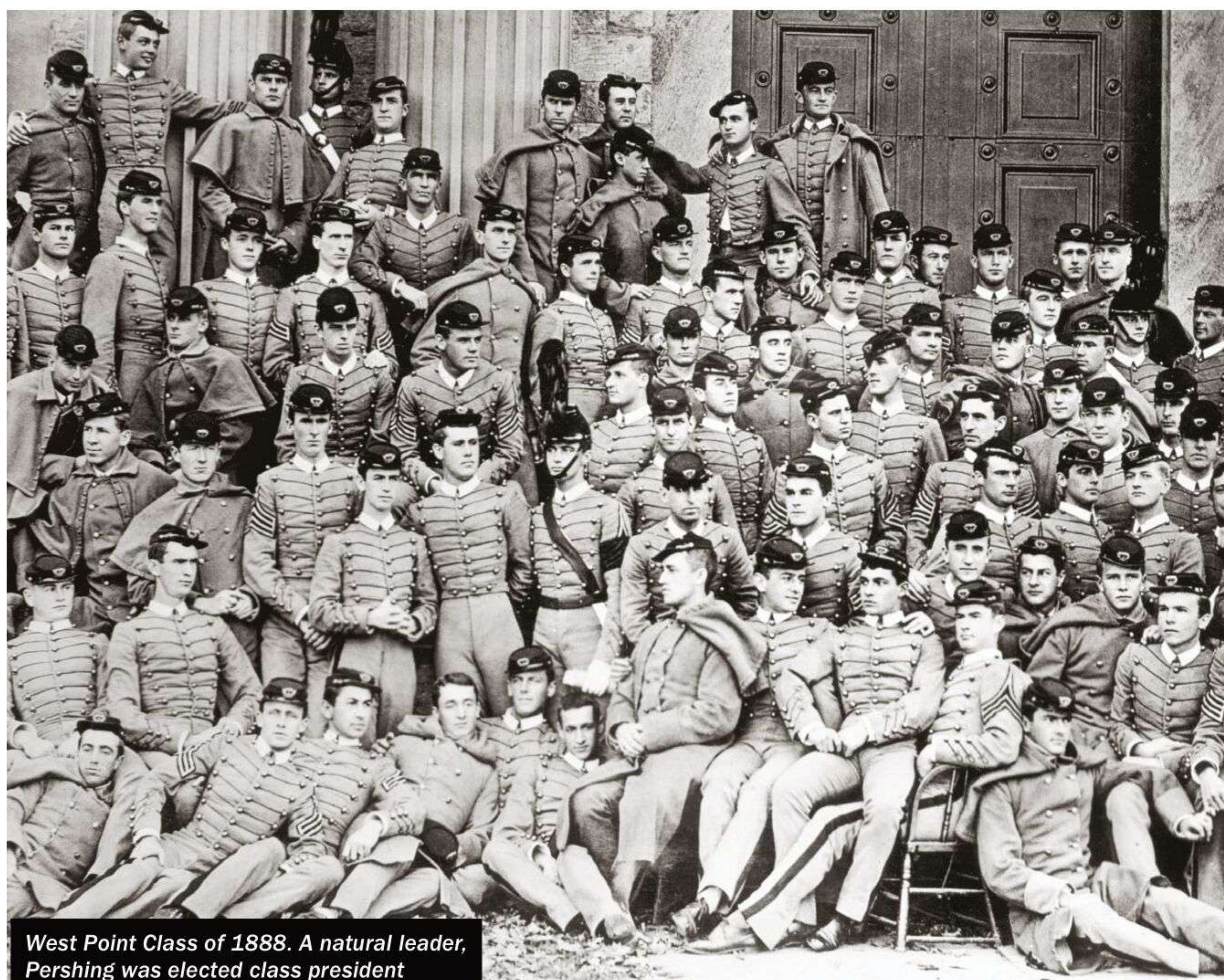
Moving through the peace, many expected Pershing as the hero of the American war in France to run for the presidency. This was the norm, and yet Pershing always maintained that he had no great appetite for political authority. When the Republicans came back into power

in 1921, plans were afoot to create a new role for this great American though, much to his pleasure, Pershing was instead appointed Chief of Staff, an office he held through to his retirement in 1924.

In his private life it was widely believed that following the tragic death of his wife, he would marry Anne Patton, sister of his aide in 1917, George S Patton, to whom he was engaged upon his departure for Europe. During his time in France, however, their relationship dwindled, while his friendship with Micheline Resco, a French-naturalised Romanian, blossomed.

The two never married, but their relationship remained intact, surviving long periods apart up until his death.

In 1932, Pershing had returned to the public eye with publication of his memoirs, *My Experiences in the World War*, which were awarded the Pulitzer Prize for history. Following the outbreak of the Second World War, he advocated American aid for Britain from the very outset. Upon his death in 1948 at the ripe age of 87, America mourned the passing of a great disciplinarian, a man of untold determination and conviction. Pershing stands as the only man in US history to hold the rank of General of the Armies while serving on active duty, a fitting legacy for a great soldier and a true American hero.



West Point Class of 1888. A natural leader, Pershing was elected class president

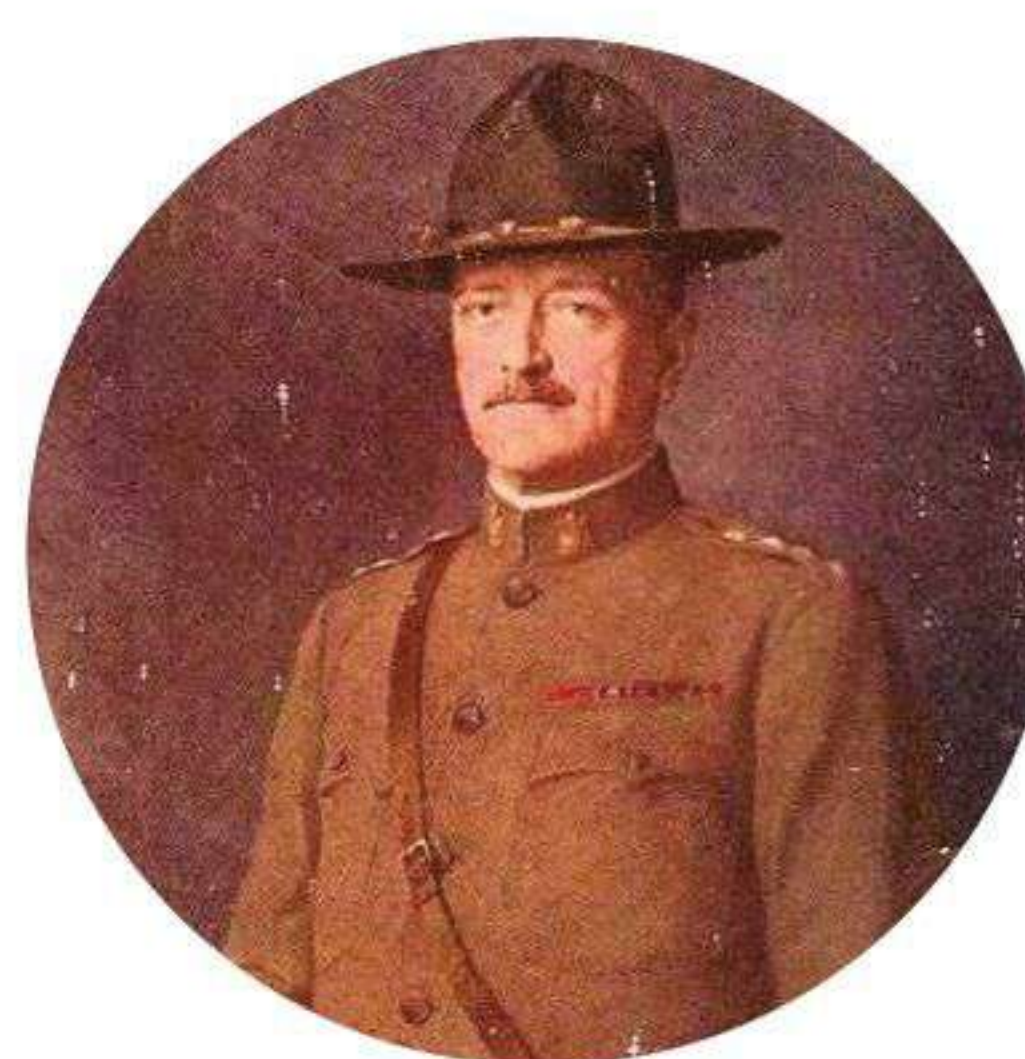


Pershing with his wife and children. Sadly, his wife and his three girls would all perish in a fire

Leads Mexican Punitive Expedition

Shortly after the tragic death of his wife and daughters, Pershing is asked to lead the offensive against Pancho Villa, which runs through 1916-1917, and he is promoted to major general during the campaign. Though the campaign does not succeed in bringing Villa to justice for his attack on the town of Columbus, it does drastically reduce his forces and his threat. Pershing learns a great deal about campaign logistics, and his dedication to his command sees him emerge as the front-runner when President Wilson begins the search for his commander-in-chief of the American forces to be deployed alongside the allies in France during WWI.

March 1916



Attack on Saint-Mihiel salient

More than half a million Americans lead this engagement, which proves a great success. American soldiers and officers are now regarded in a new light by the Allied leadership.

September 1918

Appointed General of the Armies

Advances to the highest rank, even though he only ever wears four stars as a general in the field. He remains to this day the only man to hold the rank while still serving on active duty.

September 1919

Promotion to brigadier general

His marriage is soon followed by his rapid promotion from the rank of captain to brigadier general, a move that sees him leapfrog 862 more senior officers. His father-in-law is chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, inviting allegations of nepotism, though, in truth, all but one of the generals in the US Army vote for his promotion. Senator Warren, however, likely proves a valuable ally in getting the position confirmed through the Senate. Pershing returns to the Philippines to serve as commander of the department of Mindanao and governor of Moro Province from 1909-1913.

September 1906

Sets sail for Europe

Pershing is appointed head of the American Expeditionary Force and sets sail for Europe, landing in June in Liverpool before transferring to France. He argues for the integrity of a standalone American army but, when seeing the pressure on the Allies, places his forces at their disposal until the tide begins to turn. By this time, the First Army is formed, and is better trained, going on to prove its mettle in a number of minor engagements before making two sizeable contributions on the battlefields of France.

May 1917

Capture of Sedan

The Americans' pivotal contribution to the Meuse-Argonne Offensive cuts the German supply network and prompts them to sue for peace – a great victory for Pershing and the First Army.

November 1918

Named Chief of Staff

His last great appointment in a distinguished career sees him establish the War Plans Board and push for a strong Army, thorough officer schooling, and a well-regulated militia.

July 1921



George Smith Patton Jr,
four-star army general

GEORGE S PATTON

Brash, brutal and brave, a complex man with a genius for war, George S Patton was truly an extraordinary American



George S Patton looms over the landscape of US military history as a true colossus, America's "greatest fighting general", according to Franklin D Roosevelt, a man whose name is synonymous with the apogee of tank warfare. Such was his reputation that in the run up to the Normandy invasions of World War II, the Allies dreamed up a non-existent Army Group Patton, whose name was leaked to the Germans, which then prompted a massing of defences against this ghost army. By the time Patton had wielded his significant influence in bringing WWII to an end in Europe, he commanded 18 divisions and 540,000 troops, a force comparable in size to the apex of American military power during the conflict in Vietnam.

There are many exploits that cast light upon his military excellence and his impetuosity, including his remarkable achievements during the Battle of the Bulge when the final great German counter-offensive faltered in the wake of his decision to wheel his army and drive it 100 miles through the ice-packed Ardennes before crashing into the enemy flank with a full 17 divisions. Shortly after, when advancing

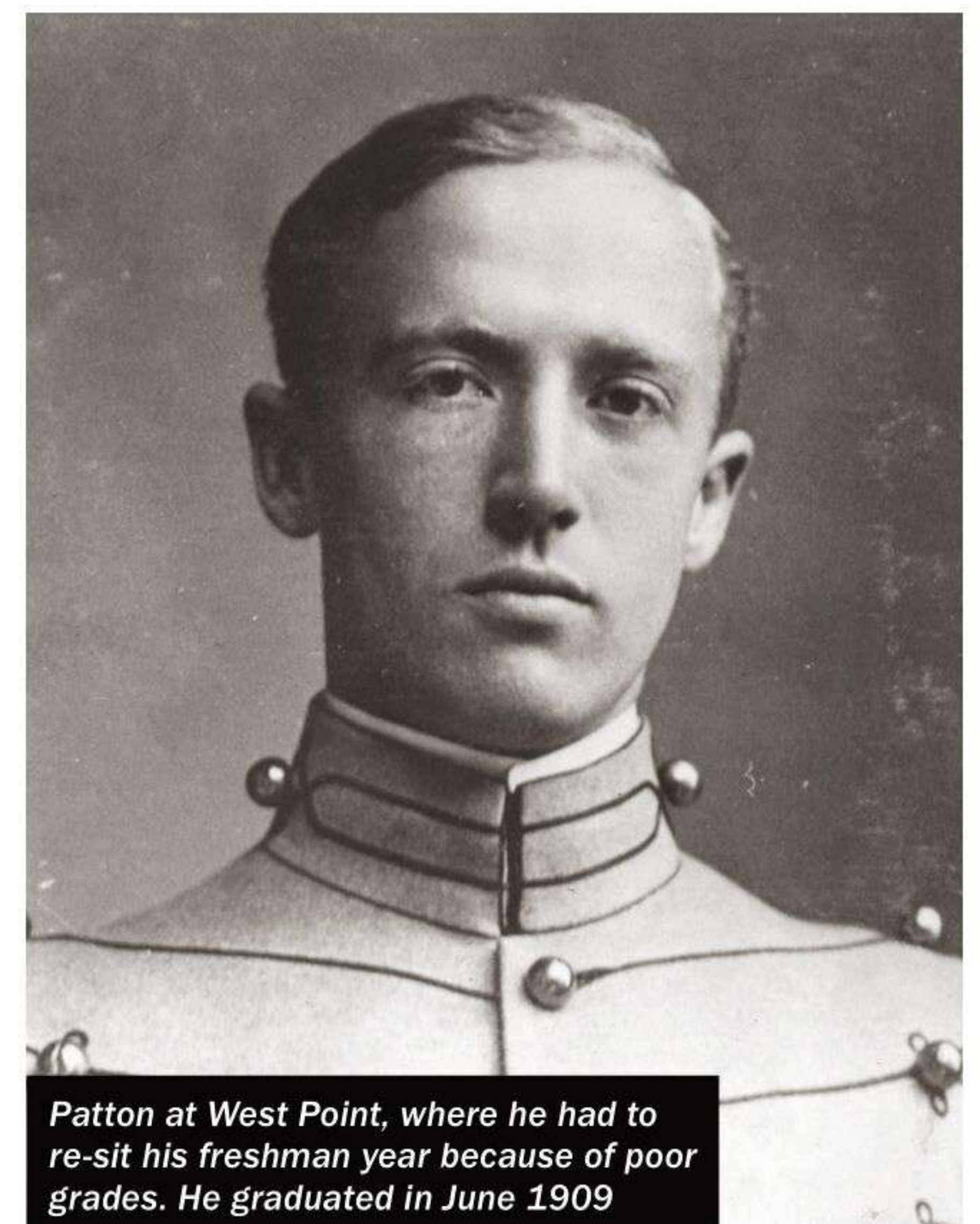
through Trier, Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, recommended that Patton bypass this heavily fortified city because it would take four divisions to capture it. To this, Patton replied, "Have taken Trier with two divisions. Do you want me to give it back?" He loved the last word.

And words fall easily on Patton; they cast him in light and dark. He is a man who divides opinion. "A warlord fighting in the age of democracy," writes Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Rick Atkinson in the introduction to Patton's memoir, *War As I Knew It*, and certainly he was a brash, unrepentant, "aristocratic snob", the virtuosity of his military career tempered to some degree by a number of controversial opinions and actions. He espoused anti-Semitic and anti-African-American views throughout his life, although some historians deny he was overtly racist.

Patton was from a family of privilege. He married a fabulously wealthy heiress; he was deeply religious, praying quietly in private before cursing foully in public. He held almost mystical beliefs, subscribing to the idea of reincarnation; he believed that he had lived

the life a great warrior many times over. "It is my destiny to lead the biggest army ever assembled under one flag," he said, before adding, "God isn't going to let me be killed before I do."

Indeed, given his family's military pedigree it is easy to see why Patton thought he might



Patton at West Point, where he had to re-sit his freshman year because of poor grades. He graduated in June 1909

be born to battlefield brilliance – according to family lore, his forefathers fought for Bonnie Prince Charlie in their native country of Scotland. Among his ancestors was Hugh Mercer, a veteran of the French and Indian Wars who fell in the Battle of Princeton during the War of Independence. His grandfather and great-uncle died in the American Civil War fighting for the Confederacy.

He dressed impeccably in a colourful uniform bedecked with stars, wearing knee-high boots and garnishing his outfit with ivory-handled pistols. He read extensively – Homer, the Bible, and Kipling ranking among his favourites – and could quote verses at length. He was an expert on military history and became fluent in French. As well as family tradition, his confidence and military acumen were also built upon carefully constructed foundations. Few commanders worked as diligently to prepare themselves for martial prominence as George S Patton.

Patton was born on 11 November 1885, in San Gabriel, California, and though an intelligent boy he suffered from undiagnosed dyslexia, which stunted his formal education. He spent a year at the Virginia Military Institute

and then transferred to West Point, though he was forced to repeat his freshman year because of poor grades. When he graduated in June 1909, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the US Cavalry. On 26 May 1910, he married Beatrice Banning Ayer, the daughter of the industrialist Frederick Ayer.

Patton's first posting was to the 15th Cavalry at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, before being transferred to Fort Meyer, Virginia. In 1912, Patton was selected as the Army's entry for the first modern pentathlon at the 1912 Olympic Games in Sweden, where he finished fifth overall. He was selected for the 1916 Games as well, though these were cancelled because of the war in Europe. In the aftermath of the games he travelled to France to further his studies in fencing and learned much about the art of sword craft. Upon his return to Fort Myer, Patton reformatted the sabre combat doctrine for the US Cavalry and set about redesigning their sword. He insisted that a thrusting attack was preferential to a traditional slashing motion, and in 1912 the cavalry placed the first 20,000 orders for the 'Patton sword'. Throughout his youth, Patton proved a vigorous,

even reckless, sportsman and he suffered so many blows to the head playing football and polo that some historians have suggested that these might have contributed to some of his more erratic behaviour as an adult.

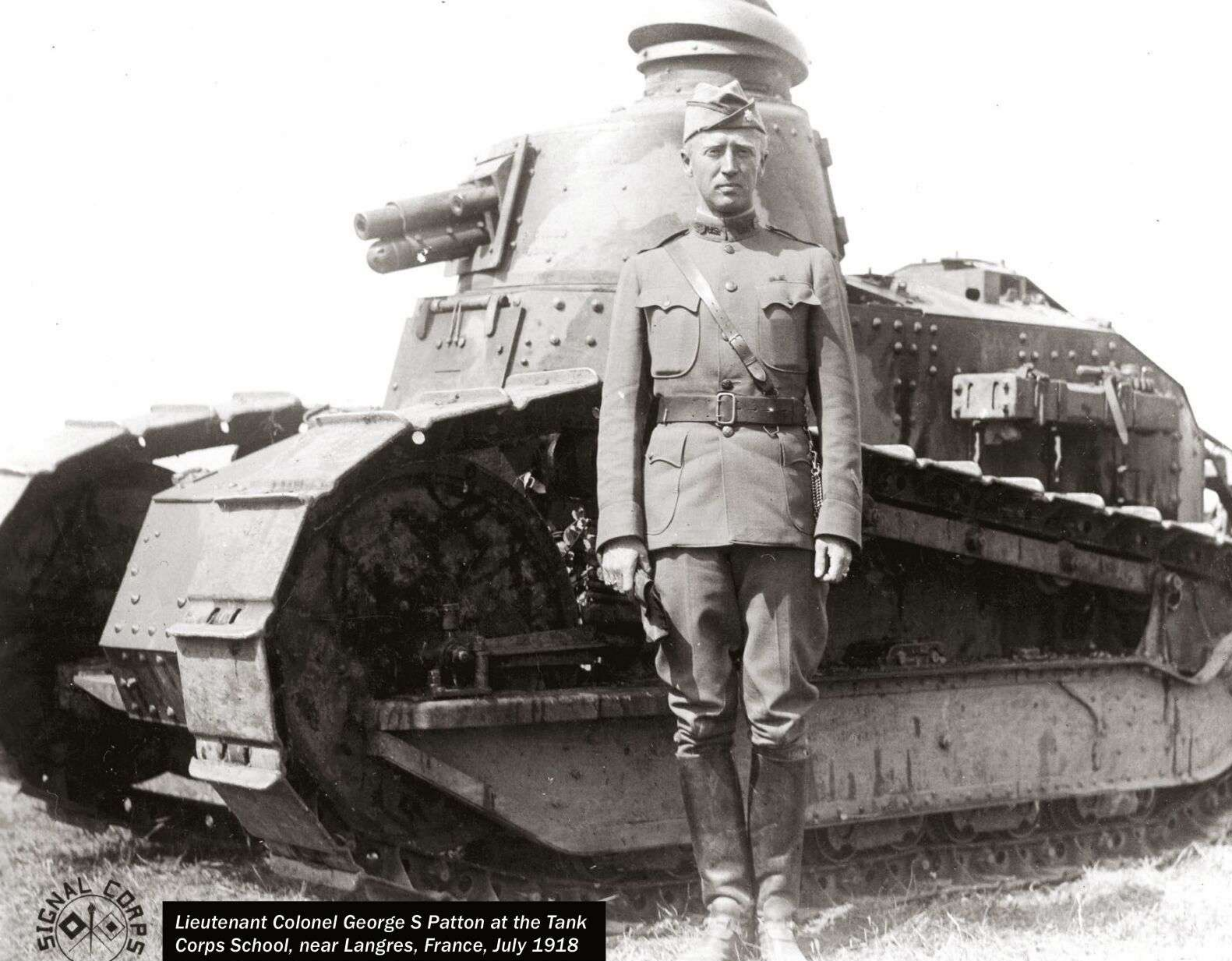
So bright was this rising star that Brigadier General John Pershing selected Patton as his aide for the 1916 Punitive Expedition against the bandit Pancho Villa in Mexico. Here success in battle came quickly, with Patton emerging as the victor in a gunfight against Julio Cardenas, the commander of Villa's personal bodyguard. In the wake of the shootout, the Americans strapped the bloodied corpses of three dead Mexicans across the hoods of the automobiles, "like trophies of a hunt," writes one leading historian, before Patton drove back to camp and straight into the newspaper headlines. "This Patton boy," Pershing enthused, "he's a real fighter."

In May 1916, this "real fighter" was promoted to first lieutenant, and one year later he was made captain, sailing for Europe with Pershing as his personal aide. America had entered World War I and it was in France that Patton first developed an interest in tanks. He was dazzled by the British use of armour to break the German line at Cambrai in November 1917 and he became the first member of the American Tank Corps. His dedication to his

"FEW COMMANDERS WORKED AS DILIGENTLY TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR MARTIAL PROMINENCE AS GEORGE S. PATTON"



American Officers of the Punitive Expedition force in Mexico, including Pershing and Patton (4th and 5th from left)



Lieutenant Colonel George S Patton at the Tank Corps School, near Langres, France, July 1918

subject was as zealous as ever, and he was soon promoted to major, overseeing the training of this nascent corps. He even designed the uniforms. When the first ten of 25 Renault-built tanks arrived with the Americans, Patton was the only man who could drive them and he personally moved each one off the train.

On 12 September 1918, now a lieutenant colonel, Patton led the first American tank units into battle during the Saint-Mihiel offensive. In truth, this violated orders – brigade commanders were not supposed to lead their men in person – and though his courageous conduct did much to ensure a positive outcome, he was admonished by his commanding officer, Colonel Samuel Rockenbach, who told a post-war audience that Patton foolishly “saw his duty to go in the fight on top of a tank”. In the Meuse-Argonne offensive a few weeks later, a machine-gun bullet struck Patton with great force in his leg and he was badly wounded. He lay marooned on the battlefield for at least two hours before he was evacuated. Following this, he was soon promoted to the temporary rank of colonel and earned the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery under fire.

In the aftermath of WWI, Patton reverted to the permanent rank of captain and in 1931 entered the Army War College where his research paper was forwarded to the War Department with a note that it was a ‘work of exceptional merit’. Ever the military thinker, he lobbied vigorously for the development of American tank forces and argued that Pearl Harbor was vulnerable to Japanese attack. His concerns appear to be the first-ever prophecy

for the disaster that befell American forces in Hawaii on 7 December 1941, and it was made long before Roosevelt stationed the majority of the Pacific Fleet on the islands as a supposed deterrent to Japanese aggression.

Patton was promoted to colonel in 1938, and in 1940 he was made temporary brigadier general. In December of that year, as America prepared for a possible entry into World War II, he sent 6,500 troops and almost 1,200 tanks on a 270-mile road march from Fort Benning to Florida and back to check their ability to move with discipline. On 4 April 1941, he was promoted to temporary major general, and a week later he was made commander of the 2nd Armored Division. By the summer, his exploits with the recruits at Fort Benning had earned press attention, and in July he was featured on the cover of *Life* magazine.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Patton set up the Desert Training Center near Indio, California, to simulate combat manoeuvres in the harsh, rugged deserts of North Africa. His experience there saw him appointed to help plan the Allied invasion of French North Africa as part of Operation Torch in the summer of 1942. In November of that year, he was given command of the Western Task Force and with three divisions and 34,000 men he landed on Morocco’s Atlantic seaboard. Co-ordinating with landings on the Mediterranean coast, the Allies pushed towards Casablanca, which was held by Vichy French forces.

PATTON: A HOLLYWOOD LEGEND

The 1970 military biopic *Patton*, starring George C Scott, won seven Academy Awards and cemented the general’s place in American folklore

For many Americans, their image of George S Patton is coloured almost completely by the performance of George C Scott in this powerful, brilliantly constructed film, directed by Franklin J Schaffner from a script by Francis Ford Coppola and Edmund H North. The opening scene, where Patton stands ramrod straight on an empty stage, framed by a vast American flag, is etched in the minds of millions. The film presented many truths and captured many of its subject’s foibles, though as with almost all film biopics, there is an inevitable distortion.

The film opens with Patton’s command of II Corps following the debacle at Kasserine Pass, and takes in the greatest hits, and misses, of his life during World War II. The distortion, however, comes from the books upon which the screenplay is based – the biography *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* by Ladislav Farago and Omar Bradley’s memoir *A Soldier’s Story*.

Indeed, Bradley, his great rival, served as the movie’s main military advisor, a fact that would have irked Patton beyond belief. For, as one of Patton’s biographers notes, it is ironic that, “Bradley received a considerable sum... for his professional consultation about a comrade-in-arms he despised and never understood”. It should come as no surprise, then, that while Patton is often presented as preening and vainglorious (which he was), Bradley is called ‘the GI’s general,’ and is presented as being a solid, sound sort of chap. The film has a number of anachronisms, among the most frustrating for those with a military bent is the use of post-war tanks during the battle scenes, but it remains a powerful portrait well worthy of its many accolades.



George C Scott won the Oscar for Best Actor for his role in *Patton* but declined to accept the award, citing his disapproval of acting competitions

“HIS CONCERNS APPEAR TO BE THE FIRST-EVER PROPHECY FOR THE DISASTER THAT BEFELL AMERICAN FORCES IN HAWAII”



Patton wades ashore on a beach during a campaign to liberate Sicily, Italy in 1943

“FOR ALL THE GLORY FALLING UPON HIM, PATTON HAD BY THIS STAGE ONLY SPENT FIVE DAYS UNDER FIRE DURING WWI”

Casablanca fell on 11 November and Patton negotiated an armistice. The Sultan of Morocco was so impressed with Patton's command and demeanour that he showered the American victor with gifts and laid on lavish displays of pomp and pageantry. Casablanca earned Patton his second Distinguished Service Cross, though the man himself was still frustrated. For all the glory falling upon him, Patton had by this stage only spent five days under fire during WWI, while combat in North Africa had thus far counted for only four days. He was eager for further action.

He got his chance following the disastrous defeats inflicted upon the Americans by a strong German counter-offensive in North Africa that saw Eisenhower's First Army mauled at Sidi-Bou-Zid and Kasserine. The US II Corps suffered 6,000 casualties in these two battles, prompting Eisenhower's naval aide to write in his diary of “one of the greatest defeats in our history”. In March 1943, Patton was given command of the II Corps, declaring with his typical bombast that he would “smash the Germans with it”.

The smashing unfolded in Sicily. With the Axis forces eventually shunted out of North Africa, the Allies saw that this key Mediterranean island lay within their grasp. Churchill was keen to remove Italy from the war and an invasion of Sicily, known as Operation Husky, was launched on 10 July 1943. Patton, now promoted to the temporary rank of lieutenant general, led the US Seventh Army into Sicily where he refused to simply protect the British flank and instead unleashed his armour in a rapid strike that overran Palermo. He then took Messina in August, ahead of the British and Montgomery (who would emerge as a hated rival). Though plenty of the Axis forces evacuated to the Italian mainland, in just 38 days Patton had ensured Sicily's capture, claiming 44,000 prisoners.

A CAREER IN CRISIS

The striking of two hospitalised soldiers in two separate incidents, almost brought Patton's career crashing around his ears

In his memoir, *War As I Knew It*, the most controversial moments in Patton's career are given precious little space. And yet his slapping of two hospitalised soldiers who showed no outward signs of injury almost cost him his carefully constructed career. The first incident occurred on 3 August 1943, when Patton visited the 15th Evacuation Hospital outside Nicosia, Sicily, where he met Pvt. Charles Kuhl, who had no visible wounds.

When asked what ailed him, Kuhl replied, “I guess I just can't take it”. Patton cursed the soldier, called him a coward, and ordered him out of the tent. When the private remained motionless, Patton, according to witnesses, struck him with a glove and

pushed him out of the tent with a kick in the rear. Kuhl was later diagnosed with chronic dysentery and malaria.

A week later, Patton met Pvt. Paul Bennett at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital near San Stefano, Sicily. Bennett said that his nerves couldn't stand the constant shelling. This infuriated Patton, who after drawing his pistol settled upon slapping Bennett across the face. The incidents caused uproar when they were eventually leaked to the press – the slaps echoing around the world – forcing Eisenhower to admonish his friend, though secretly the commander-in-chief was more sympathetic to Patton than he let on in public.



Like many good commanders, Patton regularly visited his wounded troops like these men awaiting transfer to hospital



Ever the showman, Patton preferred an ivory handled revolver, like these two from his personal collection



Patton visits men of 1303rd Engineers, whose completed bridge across the Sauer River linked Luxembourg and Germany, 20 February 1945

It was during August 1943 that the stories of his infamous slapping of American soldiers reached the ears of Eisenhower, though the latter used his influence to keep the scandal out of the newspapers. However, in November the story was leaked and formed a sensational radio news story. Though much public opinion raged against Patton, Eisenhower realised that the great warrior could not be sacrificed on the altar of public opinion.

However, Patton's impetuosity meant that he was overlooked for what should have been his rightful command – the First Army forming in England in preparation for the Normandy landings. The command went to his great rival and former subordinate, Omar Bradley.

As the operation edged towards its launch, in spring 1944 Eisenhower relented and granted Patton command of the newly-formed Third Army, though the combustible general almost

lost his position as he once more courted controversy – this time when speaking at a club at Knutsford, England. He declared as part of his speech that, "since it is the evident destiny of the British and Americans, and of course, the Russians, to rule the world, the better we know each other, the better job we will do."

Unbeknown to Patton, a reporter was present and as the news hit the wire services, people were led to believe that Patton really thought Britain and America (many reports omitted the Russians) would one day rule the globe. With this second scandal breaking, Eisenhower was furious and fumed, "I am just about fed up. If I have to apologise for George once more I'm going to have to let him go, valuable as he is." Again, though, Eisenhower's appreciation of his friend's talent shone through and he shouldered the responsibility for retaining Patton as commander of the Third Army. It was a sound move. Patton was about to prove his worth with a string of crushing victories in France.

Indeed, the invasion of Normandy was the crowning glory of Patton's career. His armoured units were not operational until 1 August, almost two months after D-Day, but by the end of that month, they had captured Mayenne, Laval, Le Mans, Reims, and Châlons. Much like the Germans at the start of the war, Patton appreciated the power of Blitzkrieg, and his lightning-fast assaults, though often chaotic, came to embody the relentless, restless demands of his generalship. According to celebrated military historian John Keegan, the Third Army's breakthrough was the first and last time a western army used Blitzkrieg in the course of the war.

In keeping with the Blitzkrieg ideal, Patton felt that not only should his armour aspire to the brutal penetration of the enemy line, but that it should, where possible, encircle and destroy any enemy forces that lay beyond the point of break in. An opportunity to do just that arose when the advancing British and American armies formed a pocket that looked set to entrap two German armies at Falaise.

The Battle of the Falaise Gap was the largest clash of armour ever seen in the west and it crippled the German defence of Normandy. The once-mighty German Army Group B was splintered and the road to Paris lay open. Hesitation from Bradley permitted a large pocket of German troops to escape (figures range between 20,000-40,000) but Patton's Third Army was free to rumble forward; it halted only when logistical problems saw it run out of fuel. Still, by 25 September, Patton had reached the Moselle River, north of Metz. "The Thousand Year Reich," writes Atkinson, "was in its death throes."



Patton's first combat in WWII came with action in North Africa. Here he has taken command of II Corps after defeat at the Kasserine Pass



Patton (left) and Supreme Allied Commander Eisenhower had a tumultuous but effective working relationship

And yet Germany was not quite done. Patton's frustration reared up once more with Eisenhower's insistence that the Allies advance a final push along a broad front, with the British in the north and the Germans in south moving on a parallel alignment. This slowed the Third Army once more and allowed Germany time to bolster its defences, and to launch one more massive counter-strike. In December 1944 the Germans launched a surprise counterattack through the Ardennes Forest, encircling the American 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne in Belgium.

Recognising the need for speed, Eisenhower ordered the Third Army to relieve the 101st, and Patton repositioned his force with great haste. Thanks to intelligence that had been gathered by Colonel Oscar Koch, Patton had expected such a move from the Germans, and his exploits in what became known as the Battle of the Bulge have long since passed into military folklore. Patton completely ruptured the German offensive, and by the end of January 1945, had reached the German frontier. He took Trier and Saar with a dazzling display of generalship, and in less than two weeks

had forced 12 divisions across the Moselle River before looping behind German lines. By the time they had joined the Seventh Army in sweeping through the Palatinate, the Third had amassed 100,000 prisoners and crushed another two German armies.

Patton hoped to push on to Berlin, but Eisenhower held him back. The Allied Supreme Command did not want to sully the terms of the Yalta agreement, which had granted that victory to Russia. And yet few could argue with Patton's success in Europe. By the time Germany capitulated on 8 May 1945, his Third Army had taken more than 80,000 square miles and inflicted in excess of a million casualties in just nine months. The cost had been high, but Patton's glory had been won.

“ROBBED OF FURTHER MILITARY GLORY, PATTON SEEMED TO FESTER AND HE MADE UNSAVOURY REMARKS ABOUT JEWISH INFLUENCE”

George S Patton is born
He is born in San Gabriel, California, to George Smith Patton Senior and his wife Ruth Wilson. Patton has a younger sister, Anne, who was nicknamed Nita.
11 November 1885

Competes in Olympics
He is selected as the Army's entry for the first modern pentathlon at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm and finishes fifth, the highest placing of any non-Swede.
Summer 1912

Graduates West Point
Patton is ranked 46 out of 103 cadets at West Point, and upon graduation is commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 15th Cavalry at Fort Sheridan, Illinois Army.
11 June 1909

Fights in Punitive Expedition
This expedition is launched in retaliation for Pancho Villa's attack on the town of Columbus, New Mexico. Brigadier General John J Pershing, who appoints Patton as his aide, leads the expedition and is impressed by Patton's warrior skills. Patton wins a shootout with Julio Cárdenas, taking the latter's spurs as a souvenir. In a grisly turn, the Americans strap Cárdenas along with two other dead villistas to the bonnets of their vehicles for their return journey. This conflict is notable for being America's first use of motorised transport in combat – something for which Patton would become famous.
March 1916

Sets sail for WWI
Patton is included in Pershing's advance party that sails to Europe upon America's entry into the First World War. In France, he goes on to organise the first American tank school.
28 May 1917

Saint-Mihiel Offensive
He takes command during his country's first-ever tank battle. Ignoring orders to stay in radio contact, Patton personally leads tank units into battle during the Saint-Mihiel offensive.
12 September 1918

Meuse-Argonne Offensive
Again, Patton personally leads tanks into battle in this vital victory for the Americans during WWI. He is wounded in battle and lies in a shell hole for several hours before eventually being evacuated.
26 September 1918

Graduates Army War College
Patton finishes Army War College as a "Distinguished Graduate". His research paper was forwarded to the War Department with a note that it was a 'work of exceptional merit'.
June 1932

Takes first command
Promoted to colonel, Patton takes command of the 5th Cavalry at Fort Clark, Texas, before being reassigned to Fort Myer as commander of the 3rd Cavalry.
24 July 1938

With the curtain falling on the European theatre, Patton campaigned vigorously for a command in the Pacific. Instead he was made the military governor of Bavaria, a political position for which he was ill-suited. He irritated Eisenhower further with his reluctance to carry out his de-Nazification programme. He had seen the Reich's atrocities at close quarters with the liberation of concentration camps, and yet thought he could make better use of Nazis by using them as administrators.

Robbed of the opportunity for further military glory, Patton seemed to fester and he made unsavoury remarks about Jewish influence. According to Atkinson, "He showed signs of turning into a full-fledged crank". On 2 October 1945, he was removed as commander of the Third Army and was relieved of his position as military governor. To avoid a public humiliation he was granted the largely titular command of the Fifteenth Army.

In December 1945, shortly before he was due to leave Germany, Patton's car collided with a truck. Though no-one else was injured, Patton, sitting in the back, was thrown forward and broke his neck. Many have suggested this was a conspiracy designed to rid Eisenhower of his turbulent general, but the evidence is paltry.

Patton lay in hospital at Heidelberg for 11 days, unable to move as he endured his final battle, struggling to stave off pain, depression and death. Just as he appeared to be stabilising, he took a turn for the worse and on 21 December 1945 the old soldier passed away. For all Patton's crankiness and obduracy, he was a great warrior and, as one of his doctors wrote, he died as he lived: bravely.



Pallbearers carry Patton's casket to its burial plot in Luxembourg. Master Sergeant William George Meeks (front left) was Patton's long-time personal aide

● Takes Messina, Sicily

Though ordered to play second fiddle to the British General Montgomery, Patton races clockwise around the island of Sicily and captures Palermo on 22 July. He then moves swiftly on the vital town of Messina, the gateway to the heel of Italy, and takes it ahead of Montgomery on 16 August. This move is presented with much hilarity in the famous film biopic, *Patton*, released in 1970. Patton's Sicily campaign takes just 38 days and results in 44,000 Axis prisoners. In Sicily, he slaps two enlisted men, news of which breaks in November and nearly cripples his career.

16 August 1943

● Battle of the Bulge

One of Patton's crowning glories during his rampage through Western Europe comes when he is appointed to relieve the 101st Airborne who are pinned down in Belgium following a huge German counter-offensive through the snowy Ardennes. Anticipating the move, Patton swiftly mobilises the Third Army and wheels it through the Ardennes and drives 100 miles to crash 17 divisions into the flank of the German force. This cripples the German offensive and allows Patton to strike at the heart of Germany, though he is prevented from attacking Berlin by Eisenhower who wants to uphold the accord signed at the Yalta Conference.

16 December 1944



● Lands in Morocco

As leader of America's Western Task Force during Operation Torch, Patton lands on the Atlantic seaboard and within a few days takes Casablanca from the Vichy French.

8 November 1942

● Operation Fortitude

With the German High Command fearing Patton above all others, he is made a prominent figure in a deception in which the phantom Army Group Patton encourages Hitler to mass his defences around Calais.

Spring 1944

● Third Army Operational

Patton employs Blitzkrieg style tactics to crash through German defences and speed behind their lines. He is slowed because of supply shortages, but is not stopped until he hits German defences at Nancy and Metz in November.

1 August 1944

● Patton and staff cross the Rhine

Emulating one of his many military idols, the Norman king William the Conqueror, Patton deliberately stubs his toe, falling as he bends to pick up a handful of German soil.

22 March 1945



● Patton dies

After a brave fight, Patton finally succumbs to the broken neck suffered in a car accident 11 days earlier, and he dies in 130th Station Hospital, Heidelberg. His body lies in state at Kronberg Castle.

21 December 1945



The classic image of Montgomery in North Africa, complete with black beret and binoculars

BERNARD MONTGOMERY

He had a genius for organisation that helped turn the tide of World War II, but his personal qualities won him few friends



Few figures in military history have inspired such passionate opinions as Bernard Law Montgomery. To the British (and not least of all to himself) he was a war hero. To the Americans he was an overrated commander who was almost impossible to work with thanks to his towering ego.

Historians have refought Montgomery's battles, either undermining or underpinning his reputation, but little consensus has been possible on a maddeningly divisive character.

There are elements of his career that are widely accepted – his brilliance as a motivator and organiser, his difficult nature, his flair for planning. At the same time there are debating points that show no sign of being resolved – was he too cautious? Did he rewrite history to fit events? Was he out of his depth as an army group commander?

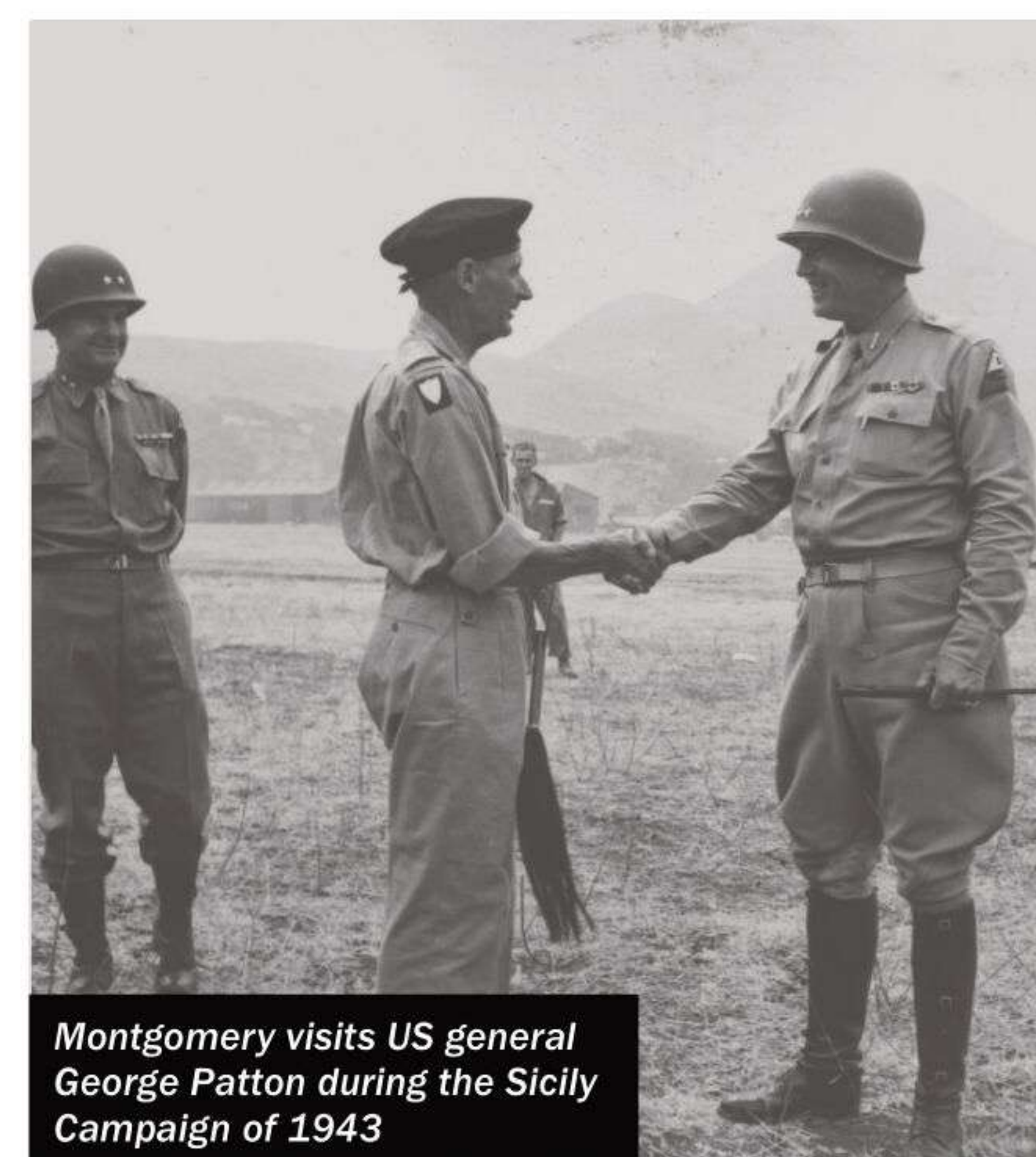
He was responsible for serious failures, including the disastrous Operation Market Garden, as well as some of the greatest successes of the war, such as the victory at El Alamein and the Normandy landings. When dealing with such a complex character, certainty may not be possible and the debate

is likely to continue. Perhaps only one person had no doubts whatsoever about the qualities of 'Monty'. When asked to name the three greatest military commanders in history, he replied, "the other two were Alexander the Great and Napoleon". Whatever qualities Montgomery may have lacked, self-confidence was not one of them.

Born in 1887, the son of an Ulster-Scots Church of Ireland minister, Montgomery had an unhappy childhood thanks to an overbearing mother. He studied at St Paul's School in London and then at Sandhurst, where he was once demoted for setting fire to another cadet. He was wounded, seriously, in World War I, and drew his first lessons on the handling of large bodies of men in combat. "The whole art of war," he decided, "is to gain your objective with as little loss as possible."

Between the wars he contributed to the Infantry Training Manual and steadily climbed through the ranks, making major general in 1938 and commanding the 3rd Infantry Division at the outbreak of war. Rushed over to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force, the division found little to occupy it prior to the German offensive of May 1940. Montgomery,

however, was never willing to do nothing and used the time to train his men, revealing his flair for organisation. As the BEF fell back on Dunkirk, Montgomery's division was among the most disciplined of the British formations. Montgomery would never lose his faith in the unit – during the D-Day landings four years later it would be the first British division ashore at Sword beach.



Montgomery visits US general George Patton during the Sicily Campaign of 1943



Montgomery explains the progress of the campaign in France to King George VI

Montgomery was fortunate to get his big break, although he would no doubt have believed it was inevitable. With William Gott chosen to take command of the British Eighth Army in North Africa, fate stepped in when Gott's transport plane was shot down. Montgomery was next up and he was not about to waste the opportunity handed to him.

The Eighth Army was listless, demoralised and lacking in fighting spirit, having been repeatedly beaten by Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps. The previous commander, Claude Auchinleck, had already solidified the defensive

“WITH HIS GREATEST TALENT BEING FOR ORGANISATION AND MOTIVATION, HE DISPLAYED IMMENSE ENERGY IN SHAKING UP THE BATTERED TROOPS AND BOOSTING MORALE”

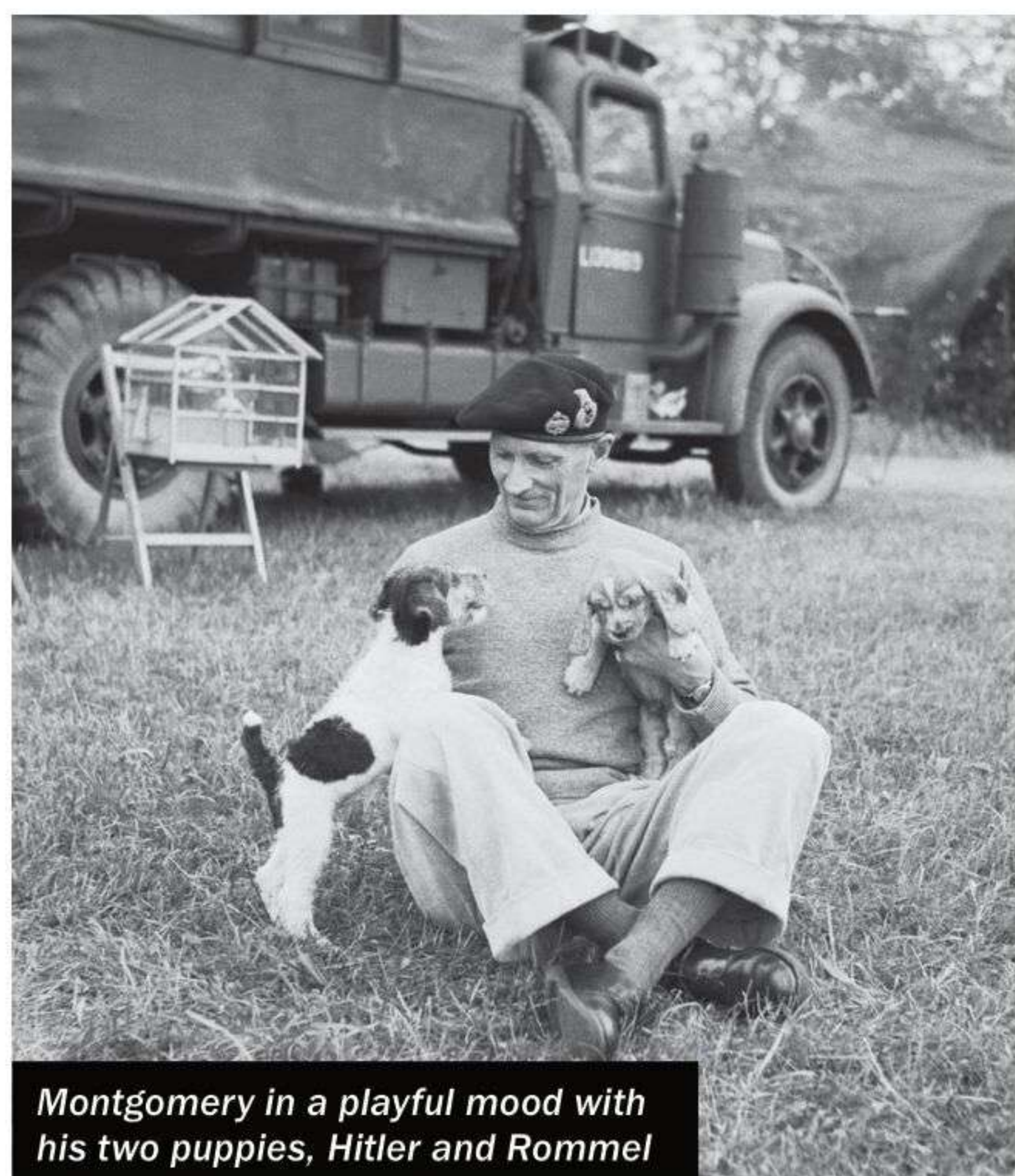
position at El Alamein, but it was Montgomery who transformed the army now under his command. With his greatest talent being for organisation and motivation, he displayed immense energy in shaking up the battered troops, reinstilling belief and boosting morale.

Integral to Montgomery's method was the need for all elements of the armed forces to work smoothly together. It was this insistence on cooperation – and the ability to enforce it – that would lead to his involvement in the planning for D-Day. In particular, he was a firm believer in the need for air power to support ground forces. It was a concept alien to the newly arriving American units, where inter-service rivalries were the norm. He would present his thinking in a pamphlet, modestly titled 'Some Notes on High Command in War', which became informally known as 'The Gospel According to Montgomery'. The British commander believed that ground and air arms should “work together at the same HQ in complete harmony, and with complete mutual understanding and confidence”. When American air support doctrine was revised in the light of

their inauspicious entry into the North African theatre, it was the relationship between the Eighth Army and the Western Desert Air Force of the RAF that was used as the model.

Organisation, of course, was just one part of a commander's role, and Montgomery would need to lead his reinvigorated forces successfully in battle to complete the transformation he had started. This process began at Alam Halfa, where he anticipated a strike by Rommel and prepared defences to meet him. Having successfully beaten the Germans back, Montgomery began the preparations for a major offensive of his own.

Montgomery's reputation for caution began to develop here, as he waited until he was certain of superiority before striking. Some critics believed he should have advanced immediately after turning Rommel back at Alam Halfa, but the British general was not to be rushed. He waited until he had 200,000 men and 1,030 tanks with which to take on Rommel's 100,000 men and 500 tanks. On 23 October 1942, the Second Battle of El Alamein started.



Montgomery in a playful mood with his two puppies, Hitler and Rommel



General Dwight D Eisenhower found himself on the sharp end of Montgomery's pen when it came time to write memoirs following the war

Montgomery had planned for three stages: 'Break-in', 'Dog-fight' and 'Break-out', and his preparations were so exacting he had correctly predicted how long the battle would last. By 11 November the Germans had been dealt a decisive defeat.

Rommel himself commented: "The war in the desert ceased to be a game when Montgomery took over". The German commander certainly wasn't having any fun. He had missed the start of the Battle of El Alamein, being temporarily in hospital in Germany, and now he was steadily pushed back. In March 1943, a German counter-offensive at Medenine was thwarted and the North African campaign was successfully wrapped up with the help of the Americans, who experienced a tumultuous introduction to the theatre after landing in Operation Torch.

The North African campaign is often treated as a sideshow, if not an outright irrelevance to the war effort as a whole, but it gave the Americans valuable experience, as well as proving they were not yet ready for an invasion of France. With that being the case, Italy was the next focus for the Allies, and Montgomery was put in charge of the plans for the invasion of Sicily. Not liking what he saw in the plans as drawn up, he made modifications. The American generals, including Dwight Eisenhower, began to chafe under the abrasive approach of Montgomery, and the stage was set for a controversy that would end up rumbling on for decades.

Montgomery was disenchanted with what he saw as the lack of cohesion and

THE BRIDGE TOO FAR

Montgomery's plan to hasten the end of the war was daring, but flawed

Operation Market Garden was actually two operations, devised by Montgomery to open up the advance into Germany by concentrating force on a narrow front. The principle was sound, the idea bold and the possibility of success very real. Remarkably, however, it was to be a fundamental failure in planning that would let Montgomery down.

Market was the airborne operation to seize a series of key bridges, enabling the Allies to cross the Rhine into Germany. US and British airborne troops would seize the bridges, including the famous 'bridge too far' at Arnhem, and then hold them until Operation Garden could swing into action. This was the advance of a massive armoured column along a single two-lane road.

However, intelligence reports on the strength of German defences in the region (including aerial

photographs) were ignored and the plan, utilising 4,700 aircraft, was initiated on 17 September. Expecting to meet only demoralised reserve troops, the British and American units instead encountered crack Panzer units. The airborne mission was a partial success, but the troops found themselves unable to hold on to their bridges and the armoured column was bogged down on what became known as 'hell's highway'.

The operation was flawed from the start (it was effectively back to front as the armoured column would have made better progress if it had started its move before the airborne operation), but Montgomery, stubborn as ever, dismissed criticism. Although he uncharacteristically accepted he had made a mistake in the operation, he insisted the plan had been "90 per cent successful".



Paratroopers of the 1st (British) Airborne Division on their way to capture the bridge at Arnhem

cooperation between Allied forces in the move up Italy. Describing the campaign as a "dog's breakfast", he was mightily relieved to be brought back to Europe with another task in mind – the planning for the Normandy landings in 1944.

Overall command of the invasion was given to Eisenhower, but it was Montgomery who would be in command of all Allied land forces. Once more, he found the plans as they currently stood to be unsatisfactory.

The failed Canadian raid on Dieppe, in August 1942, had given valuable pointers on the difficulty of a seaborne invasion. The 2nd Canadian Infantry Division had more than 3,300 soldiers killed, wounded or captured in the assault, but lessons had been learned.

Most importantly, it was evident that fire support for the landing force needed to be on a massive scale. When Montgomery examined the existing plan for the landing at Normandy, drawn up the year before, he was unimpressed and immediately demanded extra units. Five divisions (two British, two American and one Canadian) would eventually lead the invasion.

For all the tension between Montgomery and the American generals, there was acknowledgement that this was the area in which he excelled. "There wasn't anyone else who could have got us across the channel and ashore in Normandy," Eisenhower stated. "It was his sort of battle."

However, opinion would be divided, in 1944 and ever since, on how well suited Montgomery

was to the next stage of the campaign. Having secured a footing in Normandy, the pressure was on to break out and push the Germans back. The goal of the British and Canadian divisions in the east was to take Caen and then act as something of a diversion, by attracting the strongest of the German formations in the area, enabling the American divisions to stage a breakout in the west.

The degree to which this was intended to be a diversionary operation has been hotly debated and Montgomery revealed his stubborn streak, not to mention his ego, in defending his performance after the landings. With German defences being stronger than anticipated, the British-Canadian forces were unable to take Caen despite repeated attacks. Eisenhower, perhaps charitably,

as German forces withdrew through France. Montgomery's latest attempt to break the stalemate at Caen, Operation Goodwood, had failed, but the Americans had found traction in Operation Cobra in the west. For a brief period there was a possibility of trapping vast numbers of German troops and armour around Falaise, as Americans pushed north and Montgomery's forces pushed south. Montgomery drew criticism for not reinforcing his inexperienced Canadian and Polish troops with battle-hardened British units, and by failing to close the pocket many Germans escaped (although around 50,000 were still captured).

The rumblings over this missed opportunity descended into conspiracy theories when the Canadian officer Richard Rohmer suggested

“MONTGOMERY’S POSITION WAS UNDER THREAT AND HE ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE BEEN REPLACED AS COMMANDER OF THE ALLIED FORCES IF NOT FOR THE INTERVENTION OF EISENHOWER”

gave Montgomery credit for flexibility and a willingness to adapt his plan under changing circumstances, but the British commander insisted his plan had been followed to the letter. “All this idea of change in our strategy is completely false,” he claimed, although he stretched credulity in insisting his plan needed no revision whatsoever.

Montgomery went further. In seeking to stamp out any idea that his original plan had been found lacking, he attacked Eisenhower, claiming that the American general had never understood the plan in the first place, so could not be expected to understand how it had played out. In his memoirs, published in 1958, Montgomery displayed a cruel streak when he wrote that Eisenhower “had failed to comprehend the basic plan to which he had himself cheerfully agreed”. He later crowed that the American general, by now president of the United States, had “reckoned his place in history as a ‘Captain of War’ was secure. My book has demolished that.”

The matter has been confused by the opinions of other generals, notably Omar Bradley, who commented of Montgomery that, “I could not have wanted a more tolerant or judicious commander. Not once did he confront us with an arbitrary directive and not once did he reject any plan that we had devised.” Bradley admitted that he had always viewed the British and Canadian role to be that of a decoy, although he had still expected them to take Caen and attract more German defenders in so doing.

More controversy would dog Montgomery in his handling of the so-called ‘Falaise Pocket’

that Montgomery had deliberately allowed the Germans to escape because he didn't want to share the glory of defeating them with the Americans. Montgomery certainly had an ego, but it was too much to suggest it would have driven him to such lengths.

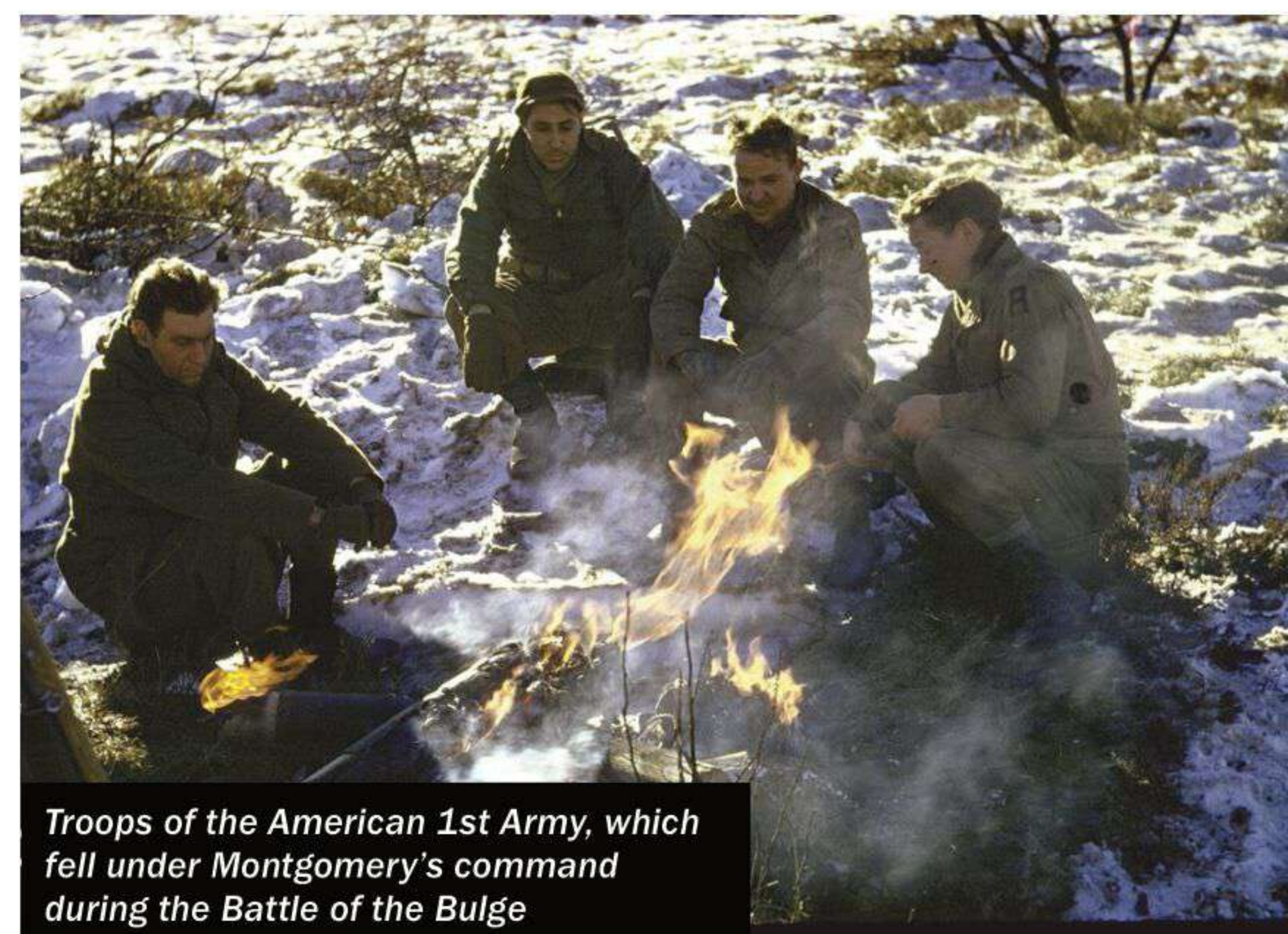
By now, Montgomery's position was under threat, and he almost certainly would have already been replaced as the commander of Allied land forces if not for the intervention of Eisenhower himself, who saw such an act as politically unacceptable. However, as the composition of forces in France changed with the arrival of massive numbers of American troops, the plan had always been to eventually replace Montgomery with Eisenhower and this duly happened, although Montgomery grumbled about it. He was promoted to field marshal in recognition of his achievements and he remained in command of the 21st Army Group.

A difference of opinion now emerged between Montgomery and the other Allied commanders. Most favoured a wide front advance on Germany, whereas Montgomery saw the value of advancing on a narrow front, making a dagger-like thrust into Germany itself that could unhinge the entire German position and end the war quickly. The theory had merit, but the twin operations he drew up to put it into practice, Market Garden, were nothing short of a disaster, threatening to end Montgomery's war on a sour note. Some have noted, in fact, that the operations were so badly planned, they suggest Montgomery was temporarily unwell when he devised them.

In fact, Montgomery was to enjoy one last hurrah, when a situation arose suited to his



Montgomery (in the act of receiving a Russian honour) pictured alongside Eisenhower and the great Russian General Georgy Zhukov



Troops of the American 1st Army, which fell under Montgomery's command during the Battle of the Bulge



Montgomery is all smiles in the company of legendary American generals George S. Patton and Omar Bradley



A British tank advances through the desert during the Battle of El Alamein



One of three campaign caravans used by Montgomery during the war, complete with portraits of his greatest rivals

'A DIFFICULT MAN TO HANDLE'

With a phenomenal towering belief in his own abilities, Montgomery had no time for dealing with doubters

Montgomery's own biographer, Nigel Hamilton, who produced more than 2,600 pages on the great soldier across three largely uncritical volumes, conceded that the man was a bully and possessed of a huge ego.

Despite the reverence with which he was held by the common soldier, his fellow generals and lower-ranking officers were often exasperated by the small, wiry man, bursting with energy and with an unpleasant habit of looking straight through whoever he was talking to.

Montgomery neither smoke nor drank and had a passion for physical exercise, none of which made him the sort of comradely type who would be popular with his fellow officers. A high-pitched tone of voice, along with a high-handed way of dealing

with anybody else's opinions, also marked him out as an awkward character. Eisenhower, perhaps as much Montgomery's sparring partner as Rommel himself, noted he was a "difficult man to handle".

Some found his penchant for juvenile phrases (exhorting his men to "hit the Hun for six", for instance) to be distasteful, but his men lapped it up and revelled in his assurances that victory was absolutely guaranteed under his leadership.

This self-assurance was Montgomery's strength and his weakness, for he never allowed it to slip even when it was to his detriment. The Normandy campaign, for example, was a rousing success, and any criticism it was not entirely perfect would seem churlish were it not for the fact that Montgomery insisted, right to the end, that it had been.



Montgomery's manner of addressing his men before major operations won their devotion, but his demeanor did not sit well with everyone

peculiar talents. As a German counter-attack in the Ardennes (known as the Battle of the Bulge) threatened to upset the Allied plans, Montgomery found himself temporarily in command not only of the 21st Army Group, but of American forces as well. Montgomery did what he did best, restoring order to what was becoming a chaotic situation.

"The operations of the American First Army had developed into a series of individual holding actions," commented the German General Hasso von Manteuffel. "Montgomery's contribution to restoring the situation was that he turned a series of isolated actions into a coherent battle fought according to a clear and definite plan." It was what he did best.

After the conclusion of the war, Montgomery commanded the British occupation forces

in Germany, and was rewarded for his wartime service with the title of 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein.

Controversy aside, Montgomery was exactly what the British needed after several years of defeats and setbacks. For his visibility (highly recognisable in the turret of his tank, wearing his black beret), his unflagging optimism and his energy, he won the hearts of the thousands of men who served under him. His recipe for dealing with the common soldier was simple: "Tell them the truth. Warm their hearts. Excite their imaginations." Montgomery's version of the truth may sometimes have differed from that held by others, but he most definitely warmed the hearts and excited the imaginations not only of the men who served under him, but of the British nation as a whole.



Dwight Eisenhower rose to the rank of General of the Army and served two terms as President of the United States

DWIGHT EISENHOWER

The General who led the Western Allies to victory in WWII
also served as the 34th President of the United States



The rain battered the rooftop and the wind howled at Allied headquarters at Southwick House north of Portsmouth, England, in the predawn hours of 5 June 1944. An army of 150,000 men along with thousands of ships and aircraft were poised to unleash Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy, D-Day, the long-awaited assault on Hitler's Fortress Europe expected to hasten total victory in World War II.

Years of planning and logistical preparation had brought the Allied high command to this point, but the weather conditions were playing havoc with the operation. Overlord had already been postponed 24 hours. Another postponement was virtually unthinkable with soldiers embarked aboard ships, the invasion fleet already in position and the probability of maintaining secrecy ebbing away with each passing minute. But high winds and rough surf might swamp landing craft, blow paratroopers off course, and ground supporting aircraft.

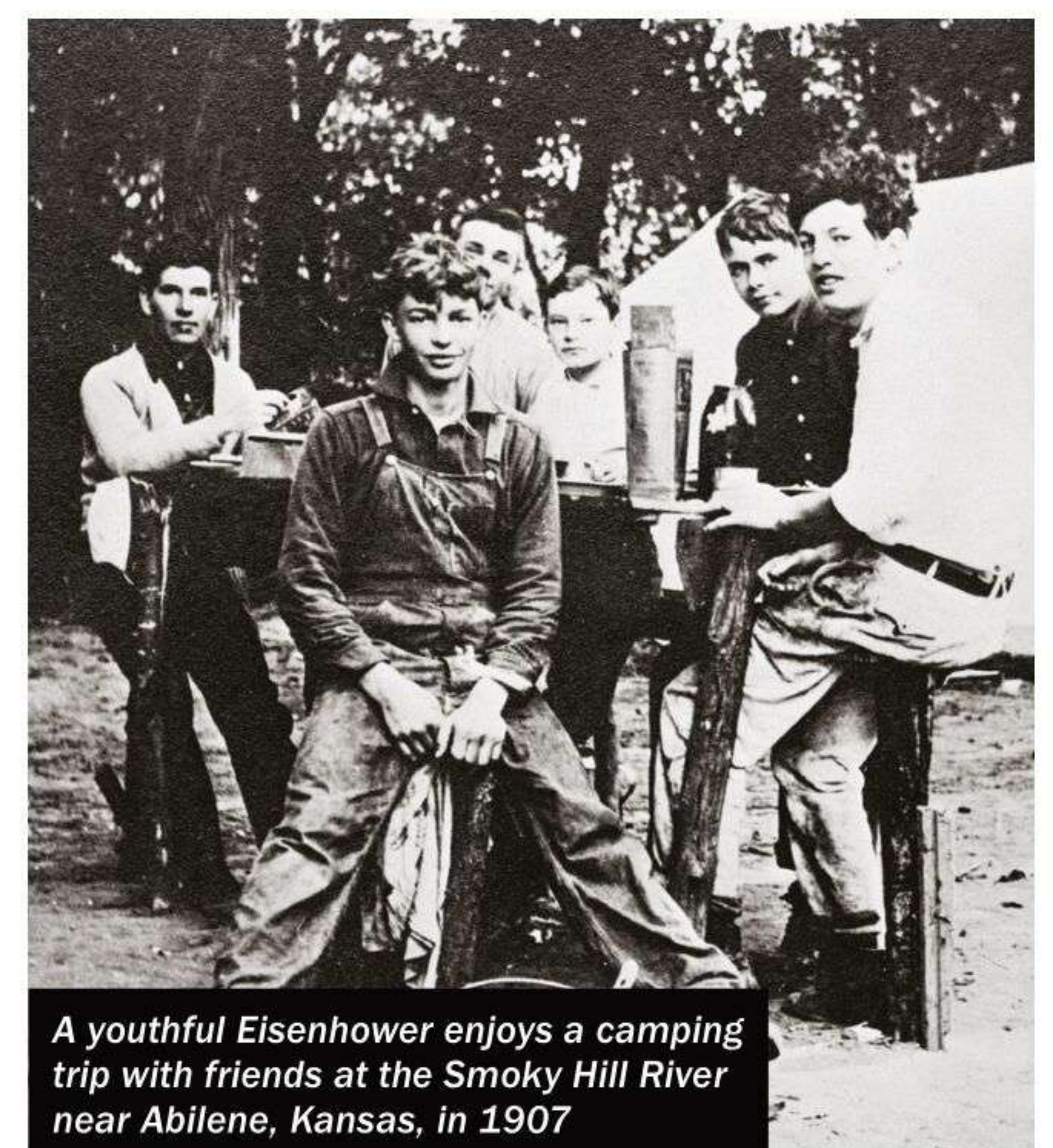
The atmosphere was tense at Southwick House as the 4.15am meeting convened with the top Allied commanders present. Chief meteorologist RAF Group Captain James

Stagg delivered a weather report that offered a glimmer of hope, a window of improved conditions that might allow Overlord to get underway. The decision to postpone or unleash the invasion was fraught with peril either way. And it rested with one man, General Dwight D Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force. The veteran commander who had overseen Operation Torch in North Africa two years earlier scanned the room, seeking perspective from his lieutenants.

General Bernard Montgomery, commander of Allied ground forces, chirped, "I would say go!" Others voiced their opinions and concerns. Eisenhower thought a moment, paced the floor with hands behind his back, turned to the gathering and declared, "Okay, we'll go!"

Within minutes, word flashed and commanders set the invasion of Normandy in motion. Agonising hours followed, but the successful lodgement achieved on D-Day served as a springboard for the Western Allied armies to advance across France and into the German Reich, link up with the Soviet Red Army, and defeat the Nazi regime, ending World War II just 11 months after the dramatic undertaking that had begun with such grave concern.

Dwight David Eisenhower had never fired a shot in combat. In fact, a military career had seemed unlikely for the boy who was born on 14 October 1890 in Denison, Texas, the third of seven sons, to David and Ida Stover Eisenhower. The family subsequently moved to Kansas, and Dwight grew up in the Midwestern cow town of Abilene, playing football and generally excelling in sports. The Eisenhower



A youthful Eisenhower enjoys a camping trip with friends at the Smoky Hill River near Abilene, Kansas, in 1907

CLASS THE STARS FELL ON

The most storied class of the US Military Academy at West Point, the Class of 1915 excelled in war and peace

Dwight Eisenhower graduated roughly in the middle of the West Point Class of 1915, but went on to become the most famous member of a group of officers that reached general rank in such astounding numbers that it is known as the “Class the Stars Fell On.” In addition to Eisenhower, 58 of 164 classmates achieved the rank of brigadier general or higher during their careers.

Along with Eisenhower, Omar Bradley also reached five-star General of the Army rank. James Van Fleet and Joseph McNarney, reached full general with four stars. Van Fleet commanded the 8th Infantry Regiment in Normandy, rose to division, corps, and army command, and led the Eighth Army during the Korean War and suppressed a Communist insurrection in Greece. McNarney was instrumental in the reorganisation of the War

Department in 1942 and represented Chief of Staff George C Marshall on the Roberts Commission investigating the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Seven men – Henry Aurand, Hubert Harmon, Stafford Leroy Irwin, Thomas B Larkin, John W Leonard, George E Stratemeyer, and Joseph Swing – achieved three-star lieutenant general rank. They held key positions, some in combat, during World War II, and Harmon is remembered as the father of the impressive US Air Force Academy in Colorado. Throughout his military and political career, Eisenhower availed himself of the talents of his West Point classmates. His greatest civil-engineering achievement was the establishment of the interstate highway system, and he entrusted its development to former classmate and major general John Stuart Bragdon.



The West Point Class of 1915 gathers on the steps of the Lutheran Church in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, days before graduation

“EISENHOWER STILL WONDERED WHETHER HIS MILITARY CAREER WOULD ADVANCE MUCH FURTHER IN PEACETIME”

boys wanted to go to college, and Dwight made a pact with his brother Edgar; one would work and send money to the other at school, and then the roles would be reversed. Dwight worked for two years at the Belle Springs Creamery, while Edgar attended the University of Michigan. During this time, a friend, Edward ‘Swede’ Hazlett, mentioned applying for the US Naval Academy at Annapolis. If accepted, the cost of education would be paid by the government, and, of course there was the appeal of athletics.

Dwight wanted to play football, and the free education was his ticket out of the creamery. He decided to apply for admission and took the

competitive entrance examination at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. When he learned that he was too old to attend Annapolis, he secured an appointment to the US Military Academy at West Point in 1911, graduating 61st among 164 cadets in the fabled class of 1915. The following year, he married socialite Mamie Doud of Denver, Colorado. They had two sons. Doud Dwight ‘Icky’ Eisenhower was born in 1917 and died tragically of scarlet fever at the age of three. John was born in 1922.

An obscure lieutenant colonel at the beginning of World War II, Eisenhower had proven himself a superb organiser and trainer of soldiers, and when the conflict erupted



On their wedding day in the summer of 1916, Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower posed for this intimate portrait

he rose to supreme command with meteoric velocity. Due in part to those valuable administrative skills, he did not see combat or serve abroad during World War I, which he deeply regretted. Instead, he held a series of posts around the United States and became an instructor of early armoured units at Camp Colt in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Although he received temporary promotion during the Great War, when it was over he reverted to his permanent rank of captain. Shortly thereafter, he was elevated to major and held that rank for an interminably long 16 years.

During the interwar years, he served in Europe, the Panama Canal Zone, Washington, DC, and the Philippines. Two of his superiors, Generals Fox Conner and Douglas MacArthur, shaped his command perspective. He attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, ranking first in a class of 245 officers. He then commanded an infantry battalion based at Fort Benning, Georgia. During difficult dealings with the Bonus Marchers, World War I veterans seeking payments for their service, Eisenhower warned MacArthur to distance himself from the violence and fumed when his boss did not heed his counsel, instead venturing to Anacostia Flats near Washington, DC, in full uniform and sparking a public relations disaster in the process. He later grew disdainful of MacArthur for his bombast and egotistical behaviour and never forgot being blamed for a spending fiasco involving a parade of Filipino military assets at a time when the budget for such extravagances was non-existent.

When he returned to the United States from the Philippines in late-1939, Eisenhower commanded a battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment at Fort Lewis, Washington, and then



Eisenhower stands at far left in this portrait with his family taken in Abilene. He was the third of seven sons

was posted to Third Army as chief of staff to General Walter Krueger. He posed for a photo with Krueger and his staff and remained such an unknown that he was identified as “Lieutenant Colonel DD Ersenbeing”.

After the expansive Louisiana Maneuvers concluded in 1941, he was promoted to brigadier general after 26 years in the army.

Although he had subsequently reached general rank, Eisenhower still wondered whether his military career would advance much further in peacetime. However, he had learned to control a fiery temper, was possessed of an affability that few others could match, and flashed the warmest of grins when pleased. He had gained many friends in the service. After the United States were plunged into World War II, Army Chief of Staff General George C Marshall was in the midst of a reorganisation of the War Department. Marshall asked another rising star in the army, General Mark Clark, for a list of ten names whom he considered top candidates to head the new War Plans Division. Clark, a 1917 West Point graduate, was a longtime friend of Eisenhower.

Clark responded to Marshall’s query with a comment that energised Eisenhower’s career. “Ike Eisenhower. If you have to have ten names, I’ll just put nine ditto marks below.”

Summoned again to Washington, DC, Eisenhower rapidly became a core member of Marshall’s trusted cadre that planned American strategy during the dark early days of World War II. Eisenhower’s frank initial assessment of the situation in the Pacific immediately gained Marshall’s validation and approval. In the spring of 1942, he was ordered to Britain to assess preparations for an eventual Allied return to the European continent. He came back with a candid but disparaging report and then found himself in the driver’s seat. Within a month he was on his way again to London as commander

in the European Theater of Operations with the rank of lieutenant general.

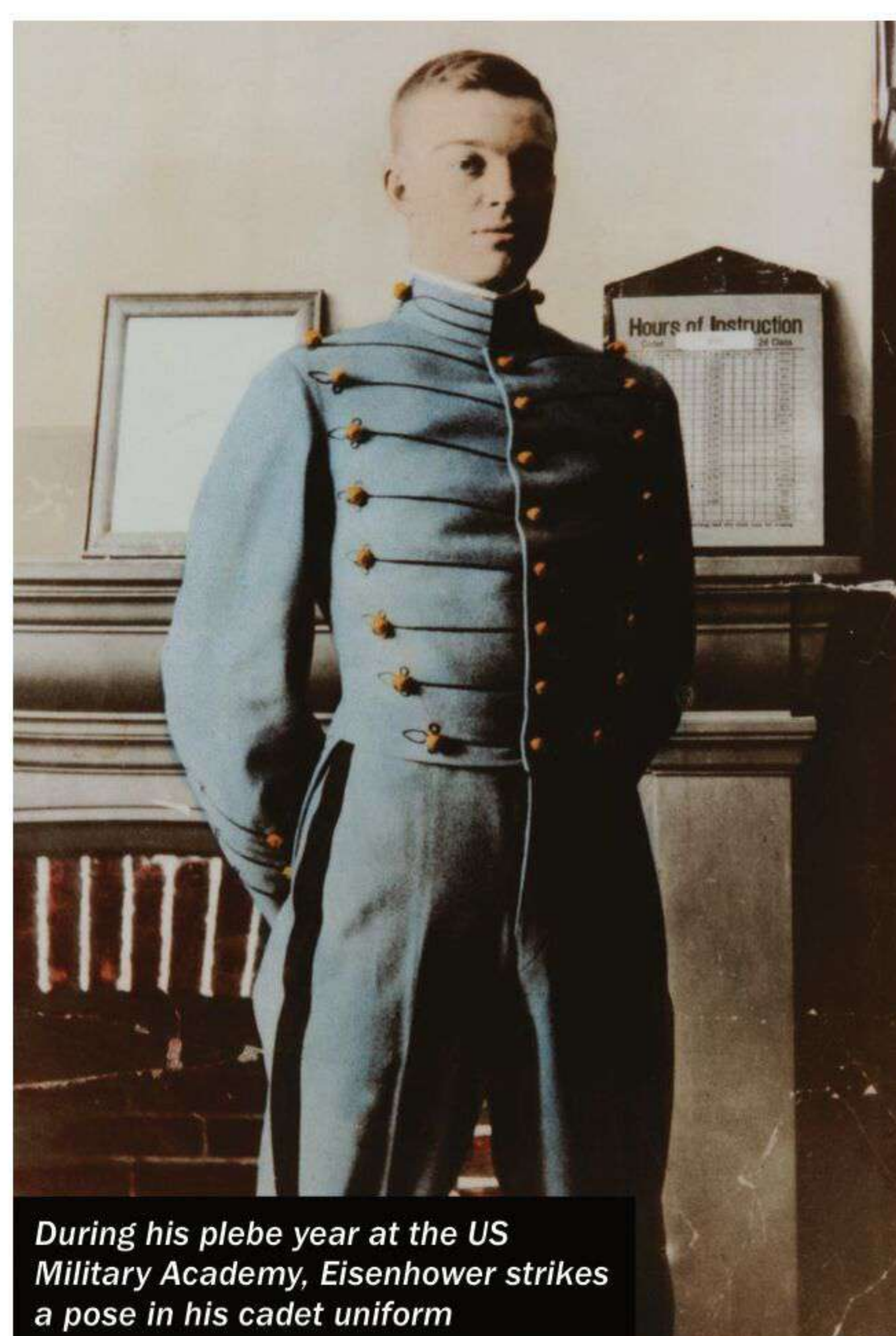
Eisenhower’s effective date as commander of US Forces, European Theater of Operations was 25 June 1942. Less than a year earlier, he had been an unknown. At dinner on the evening of his appointment, Eisenhower told Mamie that he would be returning to London and that this time it would probably be for the duration of the war. She asked, “What post are you going to have?” He grinned and responded, “I’m going to command the whole shebang.”

Eisenhower commanded the first foray of American troops against the Nazi Wehrmacht in World War II, taking on the additional role of commander of Allied forces in the Mediterranean. On 8 November 1942, Allied troops landed on the shores of North Africa in Operation Torch. The Americans suffered

mightily during their early battles with the Germans; however, they learned quickly despite some rivalry with their British allies, who were at first sceptical of the Americans’ fighting ability. In North Africa, Eisenhower got his first taste of coalition warfare, and he later became a master of the art.

Six months after the Torch landings, American and British forces advancing from the west had met General Montgomery’s Eighth Army pushing from the east, squeezing the German Panzerarmee Afrika in a vise in the Tunisian desert. The Allied victory in North Africa was a disaster for the Germans and a significant blow to their military capabilities. Eisenhower honed command skills and made difficult decisions in the field, coming to depend on his West Point classmate, General Omar Bradley, and his old friend from their early armoured days, General George S Patton Jr.

In July 1943, the Allied offensive in the Mediterranean continued with Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. Eisenhower was elevated to command all Allied forces in the theatre, including the British Eighth Army. Even before fighting began on the island, the towering egos of Patton and Montgomery clashed. Eisenhower often found himself working to maintain their focus on the enemy rather than one-upping the other in the attainment of newspaper headlines and fame. When Patton lost his temper during two incidents and slapped soldiers while visiting field hospitals in Sicily after the invasion, Eisenhower was livid. However, he could not afford to lose the services of the fighting general, and though Patton was sidelined, he reemerged later as a hero during the fighting in Western Europe.



During his plebe year at the US Military Academy, Eisenhower strikes a pose in his cadet uniform



This photograph of Eisenhower was taken in 1918 while he was hoping for an assignment overseas during World War I



General Eisenhower talks with paratroopers of the American 101st Airborne Division prior to their departure on D-Day

Eisenhower wrote a terse letter to his old friend, which read in part: "I clearly understand that firm and drastic measures were at times necessary in order to secure the desired objectives. But this does not excuse brutality, abuse of the sick, nor exhibition of uncontrollable temper in front of subordinates. I must so seriously question your good judgment and your self-discipline as to raise serious doubt in my mind as to your future usefulness."

Sicily was secured, and on 3 September 1943, Allied troops invaded the mainland of Italy. Operation Avalanche signalled the beginning of a long, arduous campaign, and the initial landings, led by his friend Clark at the head of Fifth Army at Salerno, while Montgomery and British forces landed at Taranto and Calabria, were nearly pushed back into the sea by strong and determined enemy resistance. When World War II ended nearly

two years later, fighting was still taking place in northern Italy.

Meanwhile, President Franklin D Roosevelt had wrestled with the decision of who would lead the Allied forces in their return to the European continent. He knew General Marshall coveted the post but genuinely needed his chief of staff's presence in Washington, DC. That left Eisenhower as the man of the hour, and in December 1943, he was told he would serve as Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force. Despite the anxious moments on D-Day, when Allied troops landed at Gold, Juno, Sword, Utah, and Omaha beaches in Normandy, a foothold was established, and Eisenhower then faced the great task of advancing across the continent and into Germany.

The Normandy campaign was a bloody affair as American, British, Canadian, and French troops slugged it out with tenacious German defenders. The hedgerow country, or bocage, presented a massive challenge. These ancient mounds of dirt, sod, and even large trees marked the boundaries of Norman farmers' fields, and the Germans vigorously defended every country lane and corner. Although Montgomery failed to take the vital communications and transport center of Caen on D-Day he drew substantial German troops and tanks to him and facilitated Bradley's breakout into open country with Operation Cobra on 25 July 1944. Saturation bombing of a portion of the German front line was followed



Eisenhower stands in front of a French-built Renault tank during his days training at Camp Meade, Maryland

with a rush through the resulting gap. The Third US Army was activated with Patton in command and executed a dazzling dash across France. Patton and Montgomery continued to clash, and Patton chafed when fuel reserves were diverted northward to his rival, halting the progress. Thousands of enemy troops were killed or captured during the great encirclement of German forces at Falaise, although the timetable of the Allied advance allowed may others to escape the trap.

With Caen and environs in hand, Montgomery also advanced toward the great natural barrier of the Rhine River on the German frontier. Throughout the campaign in Europe, Eisenhower prosecuted a broad front strategy, pressing the enemy in multiple locations at the same time. Only once did he deviate from that precept on a large scale. In September 1944,

culminating with a drive across the River Meuse and the capture of the key deepwater port of Antwerp, Belgium. The Allied armies would be divided, their supply lines crippled. They might even abandon their Soviet co-belligerents and negotiate a separate peace. The storm broke in mid-December, resulting in the Battle of the Bulge. Although it was a long shot to begin with, the Allied position was in peril until the shoulders of the great bulge were stabilized with Patton's Third Army executing a brilliant drive to the north and relieving the encircled garrison at the crossroads village of Bastogne, Belgium. At the same time, Montgomery took temporary command of American forces north of the bulge and attacked. Eisenhower was promoted to General of the Army on the 20th, and by January the threat had passed. In the wake of the Battle of the Bulge there was

“EISENHOWER MADE THE DECISION TO ALLOW THE RED ARMY TO FIGHT, BLEED AND DIE IN THE CAPTURE OF THE GERMAN CAPITAL”

with the urging and planning of Montgomery, Eisenhower unleashed Operation Market-Garden, a combined airborne and ground thrust across the Neder Rhine into Holland designed to capture the Ruhr, the industrial heart of Germany, with hopes of ending the war by Christmas. Market-Garden was a valiant effort but ended in failure and the destruction of the British 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem.

The winter of 1944 presented another stern challenge to the drive into Nazi Germany. Allied forces were strung across a lengthy front in France, Germany, and Luxembourg, and Adolf Hitler conceived his last desperate gamble in the West, a heavy armoured thrust through the thinly held American line in the Ardennes Forest



General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower flashes his trademark grin in this portrait taken in the late-1950s

A LET-DOWN IN AFRICA

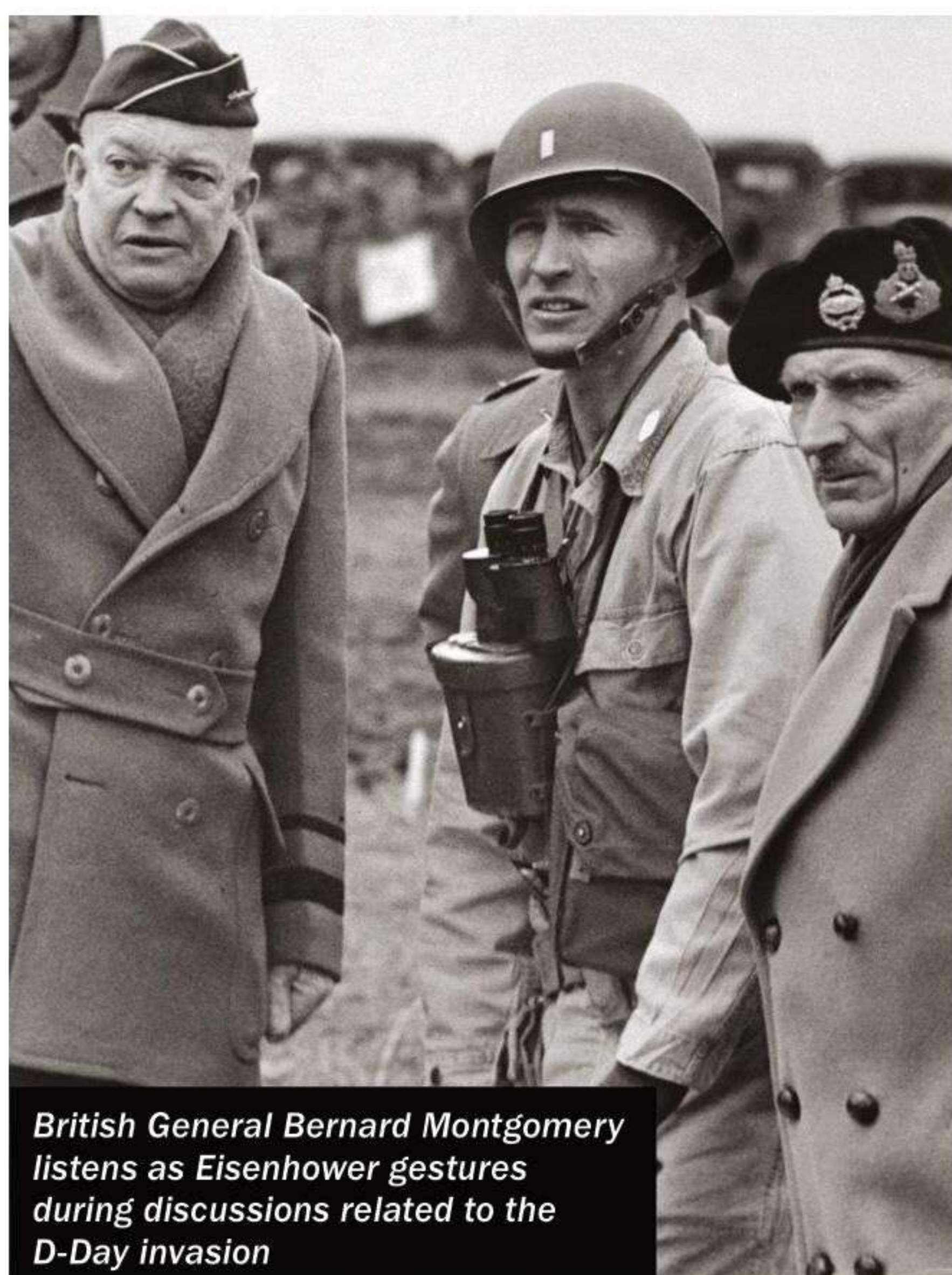
After a desert debacle, General Eisenhower hoped a friend would take field command but was disappointed with the response

The US Army's II Corps was mauled in a fight with the Germans, under the command of legendary General Erwin Rommel, at Kasserine Pass in February 1943, and shortly thereafter, General Dwight Eisenhower removed its commander, General Lloyd Fredendall. In his stead, Eisenhower hoped his trusted friend, hand-picked to accompany him to Britain and then to North Africa, would accept the combat command.

Clark, however, surprised Eisenhower and declined, stating he believed it was a demotion from his position as deputy theatre commander. Eisenhower never forgot his disappointment as Clark appeared to care more about his own career than

the mission at hand. In his last days, bedridden at Walter Reed Army Hospital, Eisenhower visited with Clark many times, and the latter remembered that his commander's favourite topic was their days at West Point. Perhaps this was because the incident in North Africa was too painful a memory. Clark again chose fame during the Italian campaign when he forfeited an opportunity to bag thousands of German troops in favour of capturing the city of Rome.

After Clark refused command of II Corps, Eisenhower turned to another old friend, George S Patton Junior, who accepted the role and went on to become the stuff of legend.



British General Bernard Montgomery listens as Eisenhower gestures during discussions related to the D-Day invasion



General Mark Clark (left) and General Dwight Eisenhower remained friends despite Clark's refusal of command in North Africa



Famed General George S Patton, Jr sits to the right of Eisenhower during a moment of leisure

plenty of criticism regarding preparedness and response, but this soon faded in the flood of victories that followed.

In the spring of 1945, Allied forces vaulted the Rhine and struck deep into Germany. In April, American and Soviet soldiers linked up at the town of Torgau on the Elbe River, and the Third Reich was split in two. During the closing days of the war in Europe, Eisenhower made the decision to allow the Red Army to fight, bleed and die in the capture of the German capital of Berlin. Although subordinates were irked at the decision, a conversation with Bradley had convinced him his tactic was correct. Indeed, during the post-war division of occupied Germany the Western Allies were

given their own sectors in Berlin. With victory in Europe secured in May 1945, Eisenhower was hailed a hero. Historians agree that few men could have maintained the tenuous relations between the Allies and successfully waged a massive military campaign with more effectiveness than Eisenhower.

The general served as military governor of the American occupation zone in Germany, was lauded with a ticker tape parade in New York, and succeeded Marshall as Chief of Staff of the Army. His popularity soared, and both the Republican and Democratic parties sought his affiliation and assent to run for President of the United States in 1948. However, he declined, stating he was a lifelong soldier. He accepted


the presidency of Columbia University, served as an advisor to Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, became heavily involved in the formation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and then served as the first supreme military commander of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

In 1951, the Republican establishment succeeded in coaxing Eisenhower to run for president. He was elected by a landslide and then gained a second term by a wide margin of the electorate, occupying the White House from 1953 to 1961, as “I Like Ike” became a familiar slogan. During his presidency, Eisenhower pursued a moderately conservative policy line. He worked to suspend hostilities on the Korean Peninsula, which was accomplished in July 1953, supported the French effort against the communist Viet Minh in Indochina, and was chief executive during the early days of the Cold War. As the Soviet Union developed nuclear weapons the world became a much more dangerous place in which to live. While the USA generally enjoyed economic prosperity, relations with the Soviets were often tense. One of the most difficult periods for Eisenhower’s administration was the U-2 Incident of 1960, when the Soviets shot down an American spy plane and the president denied the existence of such flights over Soviet territory. When Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev produced wreckage of the plane, and the pilot, Francis Gary Powers, was convicted of espionage in a show trial, the president was embarrassed on the world stage.

Eisenhower followed in step with existing social programs, and though he has been criticised for a lack of enthusiasm for the civil rights movement, he did sign the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and sent federal troops to ensure

TIMELINE

● **Born in the heartland**
Dwight Eisenhower is born the third of seven sons to David and Ida Stover Eisenhower in the small town of Denison, Texas. Two years later the family moves to Abilene, Kansas, where he enjoys tales of the American West and excels in athletics as a part of a large family with devout Christian principles. Stories of his willingness to champion the cause of the weak follow for the rest of his life, and he enjoys outdoor activities as well. He graduates from Abilene High School in 1909 and goes to work with his father and uncle in the Belle Springs Creamery.
14 October 1890




● **To the military academy**
Eisenhower performs well on an academy entrance examination, but is too old to attend the Naval Academy at Annapolis. Instead, he receives an appointment to the US Military Academy at West Point.
January 1911

● **Receiving a commission**
Eisenhower graduates 61st, roughly in the middle of a class of 164 cadets, at West Point and is commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army. His subsequent career spans five eventful decades.
12 June 1915

● **Marriage to Mamie**
Second Lieutenant Eisenhower marries Mamie Doud, the daughter of a wealthy Denver businessman. The two had met while Eisenhower was stationed in San Antonio, Texas, near the Doud winter home.
1 July 1916

● **The transcontinental convoy**
Eisenhower embarks on a gruelling cross-country convoy as US Army personnel drive 3,000 miles from Washington, DC, to Oakland, California, to assess military transport capabilities. Breakdowns and injuries are numerous.
7 July 1919

● **Birth of Icky**
Although disappointed that requests for overseas duty during WWI are denied, Eisenhower is buoyed by the birth of his son Icky. Sadly, Icky dies of scarlet fever at aged three.
24 September 1917





Eisenhower is sworn in as the 34th President of the United States in January 1953. The general served two terms

the racial integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, a watershed moment in race relations.

For most of his life, Eisenhower was a heavy smoker, and during the 1950s and 60s a series of heart attacks caused his health to deteriorate. In 1957 he suffered a mild stroke, and for years he dealt with intestinal problems, undergoing multiple surgical procedures. Once his political career ended, he retired to the home he and Mamie had bought in Gettysburg in 1950 but had little leisure time. He took up painting and remained an avid golfer.

Eisenhower spent the last year of his life in a suite at Walter Reed Army Hospital, where he died of congestive heart failure at the age of 78 on 28 March 1969, remembered as the most celebrated and revered American military officer of the 20th century.



Supreme Allied commander in Europe, Eisenhower sits at centre with his immediate subordinate commanders for D-Day

Command in Europe

Named commander of US forces in Europe, Eisenhower prepares for the first offensive operations of the war involving American troops. Rather than Western Europe, the deployment is set for North Africa.

25 June 1942

Operation Torch

Eisenhower commands Allied forces during Operation Torch, the landings on the coast of Africa that ultimately contribute to the defeat of the German and Italian enemy on that continent.

8 November 1942

Supreme commander

Named supreme commander of the Allied forces in Europe, Eisenhower and his lieutenants take on the awesome task of preparing men and machines of war for the D-Day invasion.

December 1943

Victory communicated

After ceremonies in a schoolhouse in Reims, France, conclude, Eisenhower issues a communiqué announcing that the mission of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe has been completed, ending World War II in Europe.

8 May 1945

NATO command

Eisenhower is named commander of NATO military forces After World War II while also serving as president of Columbia University and working with the Joint Chiefs of Staff after World War II.

December 1950

Remembrance

After month in hospital, Eisenhower succumbs to congestive heart failure. He lies in state in the US Capitol and is interred at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Boyhood Home in Kansas.

28 March 1969

Reign of MacArthur

Eisenhower returns from the Philippines to the United States after four years on the staff of General Douglas MacArthur. Although he learns a great deal regarding organisation and relations with dignitaries, he becomes disenchanted with MacArthur and makes repeated requests for transfer. Despite their chilling relationship, MacArthur writes a glowing recommendation of his former aide. Eisenhower holds numerous posts in the US prior to World War II and is recognised for his administrative ability after the 1941 Louisiana Maneuvers. Despite his successes, he serves as a lowly lieutenant colonel on the staff of Third Army as war clouds gather.

December 1939

Operation Overlord

Eisenhower commands the awesome Allied air, sea, and land contingent that assaults Hitler's Fortress Europe and begins the campaign on the continent that ends with the defeat of the Nazis.

6 June 1944

Ascent to the presidency

Republican Eisenhower becomes the 34th President of the United States after defeating Democratic challenger Adlai Stevenson in a landslide, 442 electoral votes to 89. He runs successfully for reelection four years later, again defeating Stevenson by a wide margin. He completes eight years in office in January 1961 but continues to advise future presidents John F Kennedy and Lyndon B Johnson. His own presidency is considered among the most successful in US history, although he faces the challenges of the Cold War, communist aggression in Korea and Indochina, and the growing issues of the Civil Rights movement.

4 November 1952



With a chest full of medals, Zhukov enjoys a victory parade in Berlin

GEORGY ZHUKOV

He was one of the greatest generals in the history of Russia, but not all of his challenges came on the battlefield



No name stands more prominently on the list of great Russian generals than that of Georgy Zhukov, yet assessing his career is fraught with difficulties.

In one version of his life he was the man who defeated the Japanese at Khalkhin-Gol, defended Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad, launched the massive Belorussian offensive against the Nazis and entered Berlin in the last days of the war.

In the other version, he was the unfeeling, uncouth general who cared nothing for his men, exaggerated his importance to the war effort at the expense of others and even plotted a coup.

The official story has followed both narratives at different times, with political expediency responsible for his alternating rises and falls. If the career of Zhukov looks like a graph of the stock market, that has a lot to do with the Soviet Union's approach to the past – no other country has rewritten its own history so frequently or so enthusiastically.

Today, Zhukov is recognised as a great general, certainly Russia's greatest military leader during the 'Great Patriotic War'. However, considering the men who at various times

considered him an enemy – most importantly Stalin himself – his mere survival may be the most remarkable aspect of his career.

Born into a peasant family in a village that would one day bear his name, Zhukov was conscripted into the Russian Imperial Army in 1915. He was twice decorated for bravery before the Russian Revolution gave him a choice to make. His background always made the Red Army more likely to win his allegiance and he joined up in 1918, becoming a member of the Communist Party the following year.

Zhukov's first military experience was with the cavalry. During the Civil War he served in Semyon Budenny's 1st Cavalry Army, a favourite of Stalin's. In the inter-war years Zhukov developed a reputation as a demanding but fair commander. As horses gave way to armour, he commanded a tank regiment that became a model for the army.

The story may be embellished (it was published in a Russian journal before Zhukov fell out of favour in 1957), but a tale of his leadership style is informative in learning more about the man. While carrying out exercises between the wars, Zhukov insisted his men thoroughly cleaned their tanks before

putting them in the vehicle pool overnight. One company, exhausted after returning from manoeuvres at midnight, managed to persuade the pool commander to allow them to only partially clean the vehicles, promising to finish the job in the morning.

Unfortunately for the pool commander, Zhukov came to inspect the tanks an hour later. Rather than erupting in rage, Zhukov patiently



In the last year of the Great Patriotic War, Zhukov peruses a map as his forces advance on Berlin

THE 'ICEBREAKER THESIS'

Did the Russians plan a pre-emptive strike against Germany before Operation Barbarossa?

In 1985, a former Russian agent, writing under the alias Viktor Suvorov, claimed that Stalin had planned to launch an offensive on Western Europe, viewing it as the 'icebreaker' that would lead to the downfall of capitalism. The idea was attacked by historians, but one element was upheld when documents became more freely available following the Soviet Union's collapse. Plans had indeed been drawn up for an offensive against Germany – to pre-empt the inevitable German attack – by none other than Georgy Zhukov.

Russian planning underwent several revisions in the build-up to the German attack. All had underestimated the German blitzkrieg tactics, but the final plan, prepared by Zhukov, acknowledged the seriousness of the threat and suggested an aggressive response.

"Considering that Germany is currently maintaining its army in a state of mobilisation," Zhukov claimed, "it has the capacity of beating us to the punch in deployment and of launching a surprise attack. To prevent this, I consider it essential, above all, not to leave the initiative to the German command, but to forestall the enemy in deployment and to attack the German army while it is still in the deployment stage."

With a German offensive expected, it would have been remarkable had Russian generals not considered all alternatives. Whether or not a pre-emptive strike would have been effective is debateable, but it could hardly have been more disastrous than the botched defence that was eventually mounted.



started in early 1939 but was barely mentioned in the press of either Russia or Japan.

A war with the Japanese, however, could pose grave difficulties to the Soviets, who were engaged in negotiations with the Germans, French and British as war in the west crept nearer. Fighting on two fronts could prove disastrous, and there was a clear and obvious need for a quick victory at Khalkhin-Gol. If it could also be spectacular, then all the better, because it would lend weight to Russia's negotiations elsewhere.

Zhukov was well aware of the opportunity presented to him, and also aware that the price of failure would be his career and most probably his life. Therefore his preparations for the battle were exemplary, as trucks ferried arms and materiel to the front and a massive force was amassed.

Importantly, Zhukov was able to convince the Japanese that he was staging a defensive operation, when in reality he had a bold offensive planned. Using massed armour with air cover, Zhukov hurled his forces at the Japanese, but it was the encirclement of enemy units that was most effective. While infantry divisions occupied the centre, armour flowed around both flanks of the Japanese position, sealing its fate.

Zhukov had won a stunning victory, and one that would serve as a blueprint for Soviet military operations in World War II. He also revealed a ruthless streak. With one of his divisions bogged down during its advance, he spoke to the commander, insisting he restart the offensive. When the commander delayed, Zhukov relieved him on the spot and replaced him with the division's chief of staff. When that

explained why it was important for the men to adhere to protocol.

"I know just as well as you do that the men were tired and that it was difficult for them," he explained to the no-doubt terrified pool officer. "But, you see, they were called into the army

the Japanese had moved into the area at the expense of the failing Chinese Empire and a conflict was considered inevitable. The area, however, was spectacularly remote, being 700 kilometres (435 miles) from the nearest Russian rail depot. Skirmishing in the area

"WHILE INFANTRY DIVISIONS OCCUPIED THE CENTRE, ARMOUR FLOWED AROUND BOTH FLANKS OF THE JAPANESE POSITION"

so that they could be trained and prepared for war and its burdens and severe trials. Fatigue during exercises – that is child's play compared with what awaits us in time of war."

On another day, Zhukov allegedly taught a soldier how to properly polish his boots by doing one for him and insisting he match the effort on his other boot. The result was that Zhukov's men respected him but did not fear him, although he would later admit in his own memoirs that he was often "criticised for excessive exactingness".

By the end of 1938, Stalin was looking for new commanders, having got rid of many during his 'Great Purge'. Zhukov, promoted to commander of LVII Special Corps (later First Army Group) had survived the purge and in 1939 he was given the chance to cement his place in Stalin's new order.

The disputed border along the Khalkhin-Gol River had been a bone of contention between the Russians and Chinese for centuries. Now



Russian forces turned the tide of World War II at Stalingrad



Zhukov addresses Soviet troops in the desolate landscape around the Khalkhin-Gol River

officer also expressed uncertainty about the possibility of advancing, Zhukov replaced him. Eventually, he sent over a hand-picked officer and the attack was successful, although the division in question took very high casualties.

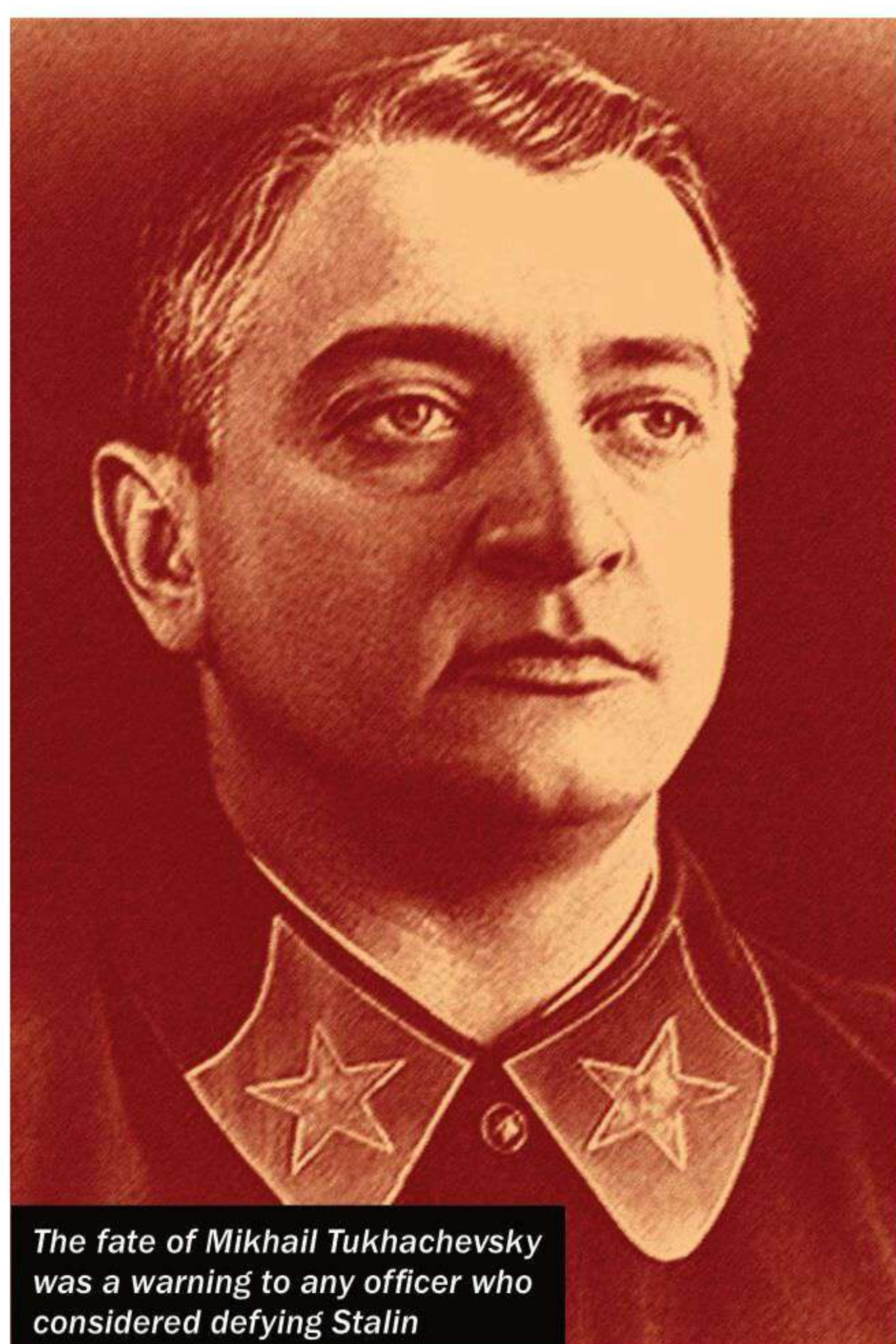
Zhukov was now Stalin's golden boy, but his undoubted ability was a potential problem. Stalin had brutally dealt with a faction of the Red Army that displeased him during his purge (Mikhail Tukhachevsky, one of the first

marshals of the Red Army, had been executed), and Zhukov owed much to his association with Budenny, who remained in favour with the Russian dictator. While there was an enemy on the scale of Nazi Germany to contend with, though, Zhukov would be relatively safe.

His performance during the war was legendary. He helped to organise the defence of Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad, unleashed the Belorussian offensive, led the charge into

Berlin and was the first allied general to sign the document detailing Germany's surrender.

The war did not start well for him, however, and it was Zhukov's handling of Russian plans for a suspected German offensive in 1941 that stands out as most controversial in his career. Stalin undoubtedly saw a German attack as inevitable, but was desperate to buy time while his army readied itself. The Red Army was increasing massively in size at the same time



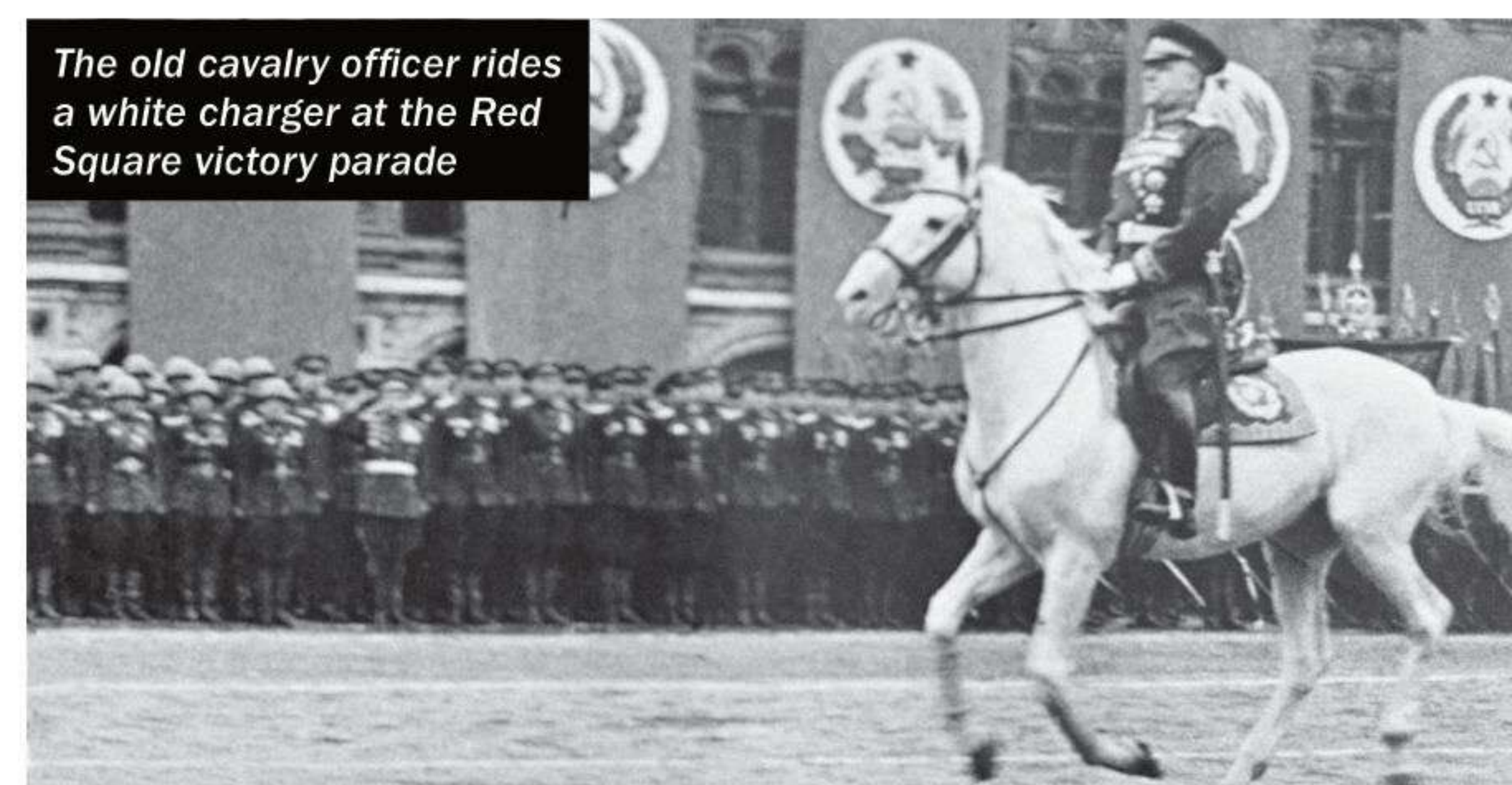
The fate of Mikhail Tukhachevsky was a warning to any officer who considered defying Stalin



The two most influential figures in Zhukov's military career, Budenny and Stalin



Playing up to his image as a crusty old soldier, Zhukov demonstrates proper use of the bayonet at Dehra Dun, India



The old cavalry officer rides a white charger at the Red Square victory parade



As minister of defence, Zhukov salutes Russian soldiers in Moscow in 1955

as it was reeling from the damage done to its officer corps during the purge.

With Russia facing a choice of defensive strategies, the most obvious was one of 'strategic defence', which called for the sacrifice of territory while an enemy's offensive momentum was gradually sapped. Politically unacceptable, the Russians instead adopted a form of 'forward defence', where mobile formations were placed close to or on the frontier to absorb an initial attack. Counter-attacks would then swiftly be unleashed to stop the enemy offensive in its tracks.

In the event, the Russian formations in the forward defence positions were swiftly overrun by Germany's blitzkrieg tactics. They were also undermined by the adoption of a new defensive line, further west, as Russian territory expanded. Preparations along this new frontier

on charts and failed to properly assess the offensive capabilities of the Germans.

It was Zhukov's greatest failure. His inability to grasp the nature of blitzkrieg led him to believe that a war between Russia and Germany would somehow be different to that so recently witnessed in Poland and France. The opening moves would be border skirmishes, he believed, and the main armies would not come to grips with each other for several days, or even weeks.

Zhukov's defence strategy, formulated in May 1941, therefore called for three echelons of defensive units. The first was intended to hold the initial German offensive at the borders, buying time for the main units in the second echelon (25-75 kilometres/15-45 miles from the borders) to prepare a counter-attack. Aware that the plan relied on the first

realised that a totally new plan was needed – effectively a strategic defence. He called for the abandonment of Kiev to the advancing Germans, but a furious Stalin this time could not be swayed and Zhukov was removed from his position as chief of the general staff.

Such a fall from grace was usually terminal under Stalin, but Zhukov was to go on to make a recovery that would become something of a trademark of his.

After commanding the Reserve Front for a while, he was recalled to lead the defence of Leningrad and then of Moscow, where he was finally able to launch the counter-attack that was the heart of his original plans to deal with the German invasion. Shifting once more in August 1942, he took over the defence of Stalingrad, now in the role of deputy commander-in-chief. In 1943 he was promoted to the position of marshal.

The massive military potential of the Soviet Union was gradually being brought to bear upon Germany as Zhukov coordinated Operation Bagration, in June 1944. The roles had been reversed as it was now the Germans who were relying on a defence in depth, but they were overwhelmed by the combined movements of four Russian army groups – The First Baltic, and the First, Second and Third Belorussian. Zhukov employed almost 1.5 million men and launched his assault at six points on a front nearly 1,130 kilometres (700 miles) long. It was warfare on a vast scale and by the end of the operation the German Army Group Centre was in tatters and the Russians were approaching Warsaw.

With the war flowing inexorably in Russia's direction, Zhukov then commanded First

“A FURIOUS STALIN COULD NOT BE SWAYED AND ZHUKOV WAS REMOVED FROM HIS POSITION AS CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF”

were not complete when Germany launched its devastating attack.

Zhukov would later claim he had warned that troops should be placed at least 100 kilometres (62 miles) back from the new borders to give them chance to react to an attack, but his advice went unheeded. Zhukov may also have been lulled by the results of two wargames held at the beginning of 1941. When acting in a defensive role, Zhukov had been able to launch an effective counter-attack against the 'German' aggressors. The wargames, however, took place entirely

echelon of defenders being strong enough to hold the initial German attack, Zhukov called for mobilisation of huge numbers of men. Stalin resisted this, not wanting to provoke the Germans until his army was ready and Zhukov would later write about “long and rather heated” discussions with Stalin. Having the nerve to hold his ground in front of Stalin was commendable, but in the event, Russian preparations were woefully inadequate.

The rapid German gains after the launch of Operation Barbarossa forced a rapid rethink in the Russian military. Zhukov quickly



Belorussian in Operation Vistula-Oder and was poised to lead Russian units into Berlin when he got into yet another spat with Stalin. Zhukov went against his orders to bring two tank armies into action as his advance got into difficulties, but although Stalin deeply disliked the show of independence, he still allowed Zhukov the honour of being first into the German capital.

Zhukov subsequently rode a white horse (fittingly for a former cavalry officer) during the Red Square victory parade and was in charge of the administration of the Soviet occupation zone in Germany. However, with the war over Stalin had no pressing need for his greatest general. Instead, the dictator's paranoia bubbled to the surface. Zhukov was first relegated to inconsequential commands and then summoned to Moscow to face charges from Stalin's notorious secret police chief, Lavrentiy Beria. Against the odds, Zhukov somehow managed to ride out charges of profiteering and looting.

Having once more shown a knack for surviving situations that had proved deadly for many others, Zhukov's reputation was rehabilitated on the death of Stalin, in 1953. He served as deputy defence minister and, from 1955, defence minister.

Zhukov, though, was to have more trouble than ever with Nikita Khrushchev. The Soviet premier was keen to grab a share of the glory for victory in the Great Patriotic War, and that inevitably involved denigrating the role played by Zhukov. The marshal was accused of, among other things, 'Bonapartism'. Khrushchev would claim in his memoirs that "we were heading for

a military coup d'état... we couldn't let Zhukov stage a South American-style military takeover in our country."

The role of the Communist Party itself was also being reappraised, as historians rewrote their books to downplay the part of the generals and soldiers and enhance that of

the politicians. Unwilling, as ever, to keep his mouth shut when provoked, Zhukov stubbornly held his ground and insisted he had played a key role in the victory.

Although Khrushchev pushed Zhukov to the sidelines, he was either unwilling or unable to completely destroy the great man. The old soldier was not expelled from the Communist Party, was allowed to retire on a good pension and was not even demoted from his rank of marshal. It was hardly the treatment to be expected for a traitor and he was quickly rehabilitated once more when Khrushchev fell.

Under Leonid Brezhnev, Zhukov experienced the other side of historical revisionism, as the new premier sought to cash in on the marshal's popularity by praising him lavishly. Zhukov, by now preoccupied with writing his memoirs, may have seen the funny side of this change in fortune. With his memoirs receiving a rapturous reception, Zhukov's health deteriorated steadily and he died on 18 June 1974, after a stroke.

He had been named a Hero of the Soviet Union four times, had won the Order of Lenin six times and would have streets and even his home town named after him posthumously. Remarkably, for a man who had managed to get on the wrong side of both Josef Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev, he had not only survived, but was hailed as a national hero. As such, he was granted a full state funeral.

SURVIVING STALIN

Zhukov found himself on the wrong side of Stalin on several occasions, but always managed to rebound

Zhukov's relationship with Stalin was remarkable, both for the fact that he managed to stay in favour with the paranoid dictator for so long and, even more impressively, that he managed to rebound from several visits to Stalin's dog-house.

The consensus of opinion is that Stalin saw something in Zhukov that he admired – namely a willingness to argue his case and disagree, sometimes openly, with the Soviet leader. Surrounded by sycophants, this version of events has Stalin impressed by Zhukov's moral and personal courage.

Although attractive, such a theory ignores the fact that Stalin was not known for his admiration of potential rivals. His tolerance of Zhukov almost certainly stemmed from the simple realisation that he could not do without his greatest general in time of war. Having purged his Red Army of so many experienced commanders, he needed Zhukov and was therefore willing to put up with more defiance than he generally tolerated.

This fits with post-war events, when Stalin quickly side-tracked the charismatic war hero when he was no longer needed.

Zhukov credited Stalin with playing a crucial role in the war, writing, "His prestige was exceedingly high... To err is human, and, of course, the supreme commander did make some mistakes early in the war. But he took them close to heart, gave them deep thought, and sought to draw lessons from them."

Zhukov was always bold, but whether he would have been quite so daring to write this while Stalin was alive is debatable.



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